

FANTASY FILM TRIO: 'POLTERGEIST,' 'E.T.' AND 'TRON'

Rod Serling's
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
NEW JOURNEYS OF THE IMAGINATION
AND ALWAYS THE UNEXPECTED
August 1982/\$2 © TM 14369
Magazine

'The Lighthouse'

A Tale of Mounting Terror
By Two Masters . . .

EDGAR ALLAN POE
and **ROBERT BLOCH**

HORROR-HOUSE PHOTO TOUR:
Fun in the Dark

Plus SEVEN SURPRISING NEW STORIES

SECRETS OF A
'TWILIGHT ZONE'

DIRECTOR:
TZ Interviews
Douglas Heyes

Fiction:
**THREE HIGHLY
UNUSUAL HOUSES**

Ron Goulart
on Movies

Jack Sullivan
on Spectral Music



Rod Serling's
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
 Magazine

FICTION

August 1982

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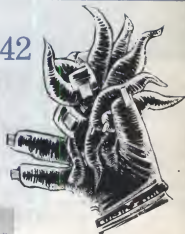
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On the track of Poe . . .

In June's TZ you had a chance to play casting director, imagining whatever actors you pleased in an unproduced *Twilight Zone* episode. This month offers you the opportunity to play detective on the track of **EDGAR ALLAN POE**—appropriately, a father of the modern detective tale. The mystery is a literary one: where in *The Lighthouse* does Poe leave off and **ROBERT BLOCH** begin? The story was left as a fragment upon Poe's death, but in 1952 the young Robert Bloch, a lifelong devotee of Poe, was prevailed upon to complete it—and did so, as I think you'll agree, in a manner worthy of the master. In fact, Bloch's *Lighthouse* strikes me as about as creditable and successful an example of "posthumous collaboration" as the fantasy genre has seen. Someone should probably get him to tackle *Edwin Drod*.

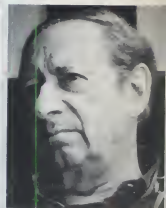
In the introduction he's provided for this issue, Bloch challenges the reader to solve the mystery—to spot the seam, as it were. However, out of pity I feel honor-bound to add that Sam Moskowitz provides the solution in a 1972 Sphere (U.K.) paperback he edited, *A Man Called Poe*, where I first came across this tale. Furthermore, if this source proves out of reach, I promise to supply the answer myself to any reader who writes in enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Aside from producing reasonable facsimiles of Poe, Robert Bloch has had, of course, other projects to occupy him (I was going to say "other axes to grind"), and his fans will be pleased to know that his long-awaited *Psycho II* will be available next month from Warner Books. (I understand that its predecessor became a film starring someone named Perkins.) Meanwhile, Bloch is at work on a new suspense novel—a biggie, and on a subject particularly appropriate to him . . . But I can say no more.

We have a second Poe facsimile in this issue, courtesy of **JOSEPH CROMARTY**, who's come up with a distinctly modern version of the master's *Ms. Found in a Bottle*. Cromarty, a Waterville, Maine, man who works in advertising (which he calls "a real area of fantasy"), says that the inspiration for this tale came to him last Christmas Eve at two in the morning, and that the



Poe



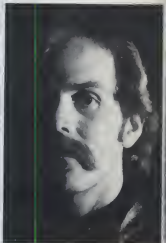
Bloch



Kube-McDowell



Hill



Herndon

writing was completed before dawn. "Why Poe should inspire me on Christmas Eve rather than on All Hallows' Eve I don't know," he admits, "but who am I to question the muse?"

BARBARA OWENS, author of *Something Evil*, is a Californian who's been published here before, with "The New Man" in our March issue. Her stories have appeared in quarterlies, three anthologies, and *Ellery Queen*; one of them won the 1978 Edgar award—yes, that's Poe again—from the Mystery Writers of America.

JANET FOX, author of *Garage Sale*, has been writing in the horror-fantasy field for several years now, and recently quit her job as a high school English teacher to give full-time writing a try. Her fiction has been included in *Amazing*, *Amazons*, and two successive editions of *DAW's Year's Best Horror Stories*, as well as in that wonderful Doubleday

anthology, *Shadows 2*, edited by Charles Grant. She lives in Osage City, Kansas, and when she's not writing she goes fishing or horseback riding.

CEZARIJA ABARTIS also teaches English, at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. *The Dreamhouse* was originally an entry in last year's TZ story contest for unpublished fiction writers, but Ms. Abartis became a published one before her story ever reached the judges. Her work has appeared in *Lady's Circle* and *Indianapolis* magazine; her dissertation on Shakespeare, *The Tragicomic Construction of "Cymbeline" and "The Winter's Tale,"* was published by the University of Salzburg.

We have still another academic in **MICHAEL KUBE-McDOWELL**, who teaches science at an Indiana middle school. He's already sold four stories to *Amazing*, three to *Analog*, and one to *Asimov*; he'll also have a

ROD SERLING'S TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE



Cromarty



Owens



Abartis



Sullivan



Goulart



Wian

piece in Alan Ryan's forthcoming *Perpetual Light*, from Warner. Though "hard" sf (and science fact) is his specialty, *Slippage* is pure *Twilight Zone* from first line to last.

In last September's "Chameleon Junction," Californian HAL HILL lured us into the middle of the desert. Now he's back (sans shoulder-length hair) with *The Chili Connection*, taking us south of the border to a land of UFOs and flying tacos.

In *Midtown Bodies*, by JOHN BENSINK, the UFOs tend to be falling executives, briefcases clutched tightly to their chests. Bensink himself keeps both feet on the ground, having written for *Playboy* and *New York* magazine. Today he's senior editor of *Gallery*, and one of the funniest writers I know.

BEN HERNDON, who conducted this month's TZ Interview, got his start in journalism writing "advance obituaries" (as they're

known in the trade) for the *Hollywood Reporter*, but soon gave this up because, he says, "the deadlines were too vague." He lives in the Hollywood Hills, studies fencing, and collects rare film stills; his most recent writing has appeared in *Emmy* and *On Location*.

With this issue THOMAS DISCH takes a one-month summer sabbatical, JACK SULLIVAN completes his series of music columns (he'll be back soon), and rookie film reviewer RON GOULART goes in to pinch-hit for GAHAN WILSON.

DEBORAH WIAN, our roving photographer, may soon become horror's answer to Jill Krementz, having snapped the likes (and likenesses) of Stephen King, Peter Straub, John Saul, and Frank Belknap Long for past TZs. In this issue's *Fun in the Dark*, she takes you to some of her favorite haunts. Hope you make it out alive.

-TK

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Screen

by Ron Goulart



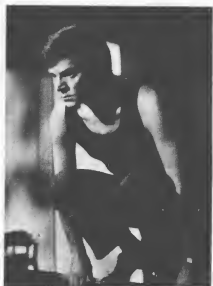
"Big nasty black devils who snarl on cue." Although you might not know it to look at him, this black leopard from *Cat People* ...

Cat People (RKO-Universal)
Directed by Paul Schrader
Screenplay by Alan Ormsby
Based on a story
by DeWitt Bodeen

Deathtrap (Warner Bros.)
Directed by Sidney Lumet
Screenplay by Jay Presson Alan
Based on the stage play
by Ira Levin

A word, before I temporarily step into Gahan Wilson's shoes, about me and the cinema.

I was born in the early 1930s and started going regularly to the



... is actually Malcolm McDowell, who, like the rest of us, has an animal hidden inside him.

movies as soon as my parents were convinced I could sit through a double feature without undue fidgeting. There seemed to be movie theaters doing business every few blocks in those distant days, and we, struggling through the Depression on a fairly low rung of the economic ladder, availed ourselves of as many as three visits a week. Next to radio, which was absolutely free, movies were about the cheapest form of entertainment going then. I grew up seeing six movies a week, twenty-four a month, something over three hundred a year. Not to mention cartoons, serial chapters, newsreels, two-reel comedies, and selected short subjects.

My father, for some reason I've never gotten around to inquiring about, was fascinated not only by the stars but by the character

actors. "That's George Bancroft with the tommy gun," he might whisper in the darkness of our local movie palace. Or, "The one in the black overcoat is J. Carroll Naish." As a result of all this youthful exposure to movies and trivia, my mind is, to this day, cluttered up with scenes from hundreds of films and the names of thousands of forgotten actors. It's like having an endless late show in my skull with running commentary by Leonard Maltin of *TV Movies* fame.

As I recall, I was sheltered from the really gruesome horror films until I was nearly twelve or thereabouts. That prohibition I brought on myself at the age of six by having screaming nightmares after merely witnessing the coming attractions of Bob Hope's *The Cat and the Canary*. (I finally saw the film last year and barely screamed at all.) In my teen years, when not coping with puberty, acne, and literary ambitions, I strove to catch up with all the creepy movies I'd missed. In the 1940s, in my part of the land, the horror double and sometimes triple bill was in vogue, so I could spend an afternoon seeing *Frankenstein*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, and possibly even *The Son of Frankenstein*. The next week it might be *The Invisible Man* and *The Invisible Man Returns* or a trio of mummy movies. It was about as much fun as a teenage lad could have without a girl.

And in my wayward, low-budget youth I also saw every horror film turned out by Val Lewton's production unit at RKO. Which brings us to cat people, old and new.

The original *Cat People* was released during the Christmas season of 1942 and had a running time of one hour and eleven minutes. This year's version, coming along almost exactly forty years later, takes nearly twice as long to get through the same essentially simplified story. This year's version is also in glorious color, adding punch to the bloodshed, maimings, autopsies, and frontal nudity. The original version had none of the above, a fact that made it slightly less sappy and considerably more effective as a horror film.

A horror film, after all, is



"He gets eaten much too early on." Ed Begley, Jr., as a luckless zoo attendant, tries to sedate the leopard that's frightening Nastassia Kinski.



"The pool scene has an added advantage . . ." In a topless—and, in plot terms, quite meaningless—reprise of one of the earlier *Cat People*'s most celebrated scenes, Annette O'Toole is menaced by an unseen feline stalking the poolside.

supposed to frighten you, not simply cause an upset stomach. Lewton and his gang at the old RKO lot used their low budgets as an excuse to try a little subtlety. They suggested more than they ever showed. None of the films produced from 1942 through 1946 is anywhere near perfect, but most of them (including *I Walked With a Zombie*, *The Leopard Man*, and *The Body Snatcher*) work at least part of the time. Lewton's *Cat People*, directed by the able Jacques Tourneur from a script by DeWitt Bodeen (written with a possible assist from Lewton),

keeps getting written up in the histories of horror films as a classic. A classic it may be, but it has quite a few flaws. Even so, there are certain scenes that are, no matter how many times you see the picture, very effective. One involves the walk Jane Randolph (in the same part, sort of, played by Annette O'Toole this time around) takes through a late-night Central Park. She becomes convinced, as we are, that she is being stalked by a deadly black leopard. "Most people will swear they saw a leopard in the hedge above her," Lewton once told an interviewer. "But they didn't."

Another scene that always provides goose bumps is Jane Randolph's late-night swim alone in the indoor pool. Again she suspects the panther is after her. We hear growls, see ominous shadows, but never actually get a look at the creature. Near the end of the film comes the scene with psychiatrist Tom Conway and Simone Simon (the cat girl of this version). Conway, resorting to some primal therapy, tires to make love to Simone, and she, apparently, turns into a leopard and does him in. Here, too, everything is suggested and nothing clearly seen. Since Conway carries a sword cane (possibly standard equipment for Hollywood psychiatrists in the forties), he is able to deal Simone a lethal blow before expiring. Simone ends up, in human form, dead in the Central Park Zoo near the cage of the leopard that has always fascinated her.

Paul Schrader has no use for subtleties. He's got a movie called

Cat People and he's going to show you cats. Big nasty black devils who snarl on cue. He's dropped the psychiatrist from his version, but he does take a crack at Tournier's other two big scenes. And botches them both. He has Annette O'Toole stalked through a New Orleans park (this version has a change of venue from Manhattan to New Orleans). But it takes place in what looks like broad daylight, and she is jogging. He ends the scene with the bus flashing in from the left, just as in *Cat People* #1, but doesn't cause even a gasp. The pool scene, which follows immediately (yet inexplicably seems to take place at night), has the added advantage of showing us Miss O'Toole's admirable bare bosom. The scene, though, is not at all frightening. There is the added problem that our current cat lady (Nastassia Kinski) has no real reason to be ticked off at Miss O'Toole. In the first version, the cat lady was married to the hero and was jealous of his former lady friend. In this year's New Morality version, Nastassia is still shackled up with the fellow, and he and O'Toole seem to be just good pals.

Cat People of 1942 featured Kent Smith as the leading man, playing the role of what might be called, in the thirties and forties, "the simp." He was clean-cut, obtuse, well-meaning, and never quite aware of what was really going on until too late. Smith, of course, can't believe Simone Simon can really turn into a cat. He also accepts the idea that even after they're married they'll have no sex, since it might bring out the beast in her. Today's simp is John Heard, who comes across as a blend of William Hurt and John Hurt, with a dash of that sterling 1930s simp, Gene Raymond. Heard doesn't believe in werewolves either, not until it's too late.

In order to beef up the sexual elements implied in the 1942 version, Schrader and screenwriter Alan Ormsby have given their cat girl a brother. Not only is he a cat person, too, but his whole problem is triggered by his bouts of horniness. He'd also like to commit incest. The role is played by Malcolm McDowell, and he gives what has to be the dippiest performance of his career (which is



"... all the witty chitchat." Christopher Reeve and Michael Caine, as a budding playwright and his mentor in *Deathtrap*, toast to the success of their collaboration. "Kids across the country were crestfallen," says Goulart, at what the film revealed.

going some). It is obvious that he is suffering not only from cat fever but from a bad case of David Warner Syndrome. When he is not chewing up innocent young ladies, he is chewing up the scenery. McDowell dwells in a suitably bizarre New Orleans home and is looked after by Ruby Dee. Miss Dee manages to be completely unintelligible throughout the film, no mean feat in Dolby stereo. It occurred to me later that she might be attempting a send-up of the Haitian lady (always played by Teresa Harris) who figured in several of the Lewton films, including his *Cat People*. She wears a head rag well.

What is there to say about Nastassia Kinski? She is lovely. She is graceful throughout—not an easy task in a picture wherein she is called upon to climb a stone wall, eat a live rabbit, and be tied to a lumpy bed by Mr. Heard. Although she isn't very convincing as a young woman cursed with hereditary shape-changing tendencies, she looks absolutely splendid without a stitch of clothing on. The only completely successful performance in the movie is turned in by Ed Begley, Jr. (who looks nothing like Ed Begley, Sr.) as the hapless zoo attendant. He gets eaten much too early on.

It's interesting that Schrader and his gang, in fashioning an up-to-date *Cat People*, have completely failed to understand what Lewton and his bunch were up to back there forty years ago. Lewton and Tournier were well aware that the most frightening things are those unseen and that a shadow and a strange sound can frighten better than all the trained leopards in Hollywood. Since guts and gore are now the accepted staples of the horror genre, it's doubtful any other producers and directors will pick up on the lesson of the low-budget master.

I'm always a bit wary about movies reviewers call "delicious," especially if they're mysteries. But I found *Deathtrap*, with Michael Caine, Dyan Cannon, Henry Jones, and Christopher Reeve, to be an entertaining, if smug, picture. In all the witty chitchat about plagiarism and who was stealing what plot from whom, I kept expecting someone to mention Henri-Georges Clouzot, from whose film *Diabolique* (1954) the basic notion of *Deathtrap* is borrowed. This is the movie, by the way, that caused crestfallen kids across the country to exit movie houses muttering, "Gee, Superman's a fag." Well, that's what they get for sneaking into R-rated movies. **17**

Books

In the absence, this month, of our usual columnist, Thomas Disch, there's time for a brief look at some of the more interesting books we've received in recent months but that Tom hasn't reviewed.

REFERENCE: One of the attractions of the horror genre, for me, has always been the notion that, given a year or two of idleness, I could read literally everything ever written in the field, from Gothic novels on up to the most recent *Year's Best* collection from DAW. However, the sheer size of *Horror Literature* (Bowker, \$29.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback), a 570-page extravaganza edited by Marshall B. Tymn, suggests that something nearer a decade might be required. The book features capsule descriptions of more than 1300 novels, collections, and magazines, including a truly monumental section on "The Gothic Romance" by Frederick S. Frank which annotates, with considerable relish, well over four hundred volumes, most of which sound as lurid as anything ever seen in E.C. Comics. Frank's 173-page section, the longest, is followed by Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV on the midnineteenth century (Hawthorne, Irving, Le Fanu, and the rest); *Elegant Nightmares* author (and TZ columnist) Jack Sullivan on such later greats as Algernon Blackwood, William Hope Hodgson, M.R. James, and Arthur Machen—in short, the golden age of English ghost stories; Gary William Crawford on "The Modern Masters," with critiques of more than two hundred books and content-lists of some seventy-five modern anthologies; a twenty-eight-page guide to "The Horror Pulps" by Robert Weinberg (a section much criticized, and with justice, for inexplicably omitting any mention of *Weird Tales*, on whose celebrated history Weinberg is in fact an expert); a groundbreaking historical survey of supernatural verse by Steve Eng; and a forty-page annotated list of nonfiction material—biographies, criticism, and journals—by the indefatigable Mike Ashley (who'll be profiling yet another "Essential Writer" in next month's TZ). The index alone is impressive,



with over three thousand entries stretching from *Aböllino*, the *Great Bandit*, an eighteenth-century German novel, to—coincidentally enough—Johann Zschokke, that novel's author. Of course, any student of the genre will find judgments he disagrees with and books he wishes hadn't been left out (one critic has already berated Gary Crawford for not including James Dickey's *Deliverance*!); and I question the wisdom of discussing each author's titles alphabetically rather than chronologically (as is done in another Bowker compendium, *Fantasy Literature*), since it means that, in some cases, a sequel is described before the work that preceded it. Still, the field has never seen a reference guide as comprehensive as this one; it represents thousands of man-hours of labor—and they were hours well spent.

While *Horror Literature* is designed for library use, *A Reader's Guide to Fantasy* by Baird Searles, Beth Meacham, and Michael Franklin (Avon, \$2.95) is aimed at newcomers looking for a good read but unfamiliar with what the field has to offer—which describes many a visitor to The Science Fiction Shop, New York's first such specialty bookstore, with which all

three authors have been associated. "Fantasy" is, of course, a vague term that can encompass a great many things; as Poul Anderson notes in his introduction, "I remember a remark Tony Boucher made to me while he was still editing *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, which he had helped found. Judging by his mail, he said, a majority of his readers preferred fantasy to science fiction, but didn't know that they did." The *Guide* seeks to clarify the term by dividing fantasy into six rather ingenious categories: "Beyond the Fields We Know" (the phrase is Lord Dunsany's), i.e., stories set entirely in imaginary worlds; "There and Back Again" (*The Hobbit's* subtitle), tales like *The Wizard of Oz* which begin (and may end) in the real world; "Unicorns in the Garden" (from a Thurber title), in which the real world plays host to fantastic events; "That Old Black Magic" (i.e., horror), in which those events are terrifying; "Bambi's Children," in which animals speak and act like humans; and "Once and Future Kings, Queens, and Heroes," tales based on legendry. Most of the book, however, is a *Who's Who*, spotlighting some 160 major figures past and present. As in the authors' previous work, *A Reader's Guide to Science Fiction* (Avon, \$2.95), the write-ups are nonscholarly, conversational in tone, and determinedly upbeat ("We have tried not to be judgmental," they confide, "a difficult task at times"). Years of birth and death appear, like tiny postscripts, only at the bottoms of the individual write-ups, some aren't provided at all, and we're never told the full names of such initialed worthies as A. Merritt, M. R. James, B. J. Chute, C. L. Moore, C. S. Lewis and others. Folklorist Katharine Briggs (listed this way on book after book) appears simply as "K. M. Briggs," Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu as just "Sheridan Le Fanu." (Paradoxically, children's writer E. Nesbit appears throughout as "Edith.") And while we're at it, why no mention of E. B. White or A. A. Milne in a book that finds room for Kenneth Grahame, L. Frank Baum, and Hugh Lofting? Why no word on John Collier, Jack

Vance, H. H. "Saki" Munro, Charles L. Grant, Shirley Jackson, or Angela Carter when the authors manage to find something nice to say about Lin Carter, Brian Lumley, Andrew Offutt, and the like? But no need to carp (pretty soon I'll be crying, "What, no James Dickey?"); this is a welcome—and welcoming—introduction to the field, and it's impossible to look through it without coming across some writer you'll just have to see as soon as you have time.

John Stanley brought a sense of fun and frivolity, but little technical information, to his *Creature Features Movie Guide* (reviewed in April's TZ). However, **Horror and Science Fiction Films II** by Donald C. Willis (Scarecrow Press, Box 656 Metuchen, NJ 08840; \$28.50) is another case entirely, covering every sort of weird film released in the past decade with an academic,

almost monastic precision and thoroughness. (Volume I came out in 1972 and covered all films till that year.) Only a minority of the titles receive personal critiques from Willis; usually there's just a line or two of plot summary, often from trade publications or other sources. But that's more than made up for by the wealth of raw data: alternate titles, running time, screenplay, art direction, music, special effects, makeup—all the credits, presumably, that Willis was able to obtain (though by no means are all 2,350 entries so complete). The book itself resembles a computerized checklist, with each title followed by a formidable thicket of names, numbers, and abbreviations—not the sort of thing that lends itself to casual browsing, though it's always a pleasure to come across such evocative listings as "*Hungry Pets* see *Please Don't Eat My Mother!*,"

"*Shudder* see *Kiss of the Tarantula*," "*Jungle Burger* see *Shame of the Jungle*," and "*Quando le Donne Persero la Coda* see *When Women Lost Their Tails*." (The second to last, incidentally, featured voices dubbed by Bill Murray and John Belushi.) Willis, when he does express opinions, proves a tough man to please; what seems to excite him most, in fact, is listing all the in-jokes and horror-film homages in *The Howling*. But then, that's just what a monastic type ought to do.

Anatomy of Wonder: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction, edited by Neil Barron (Bowker, \$32.95 hardcover, \$22.95 paperback), is an update of Barron's 1976 edition and takes the same approach as Tymn's *Horror Literature*, parceling out the history of sf among a dozen researchers who, together, catalogue almost two thousand titles.

Tyros who hope someday to be

"If you are seriously interested in science fiction, this is a 'must have' book." — Gene Roddenberry

Sci-fi fans: if you were to buy only one book on your hobby, this is the one. It's definitive — the one reference a buff must have. From A to Z — from *Abbott & Costello Go to Mars* to *Zantur: The Thing from Venus* — here are over 1,000 detailed entries on the best (and worst) in SF movies, TV, authors, publications, organizations and awards.

The superman who gives you this FUN reference book is *Starlog* and *Future Life* ex-editor Ed Naha. Ed assembles:

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□ 292 TV shows: series, specials, made-for-TV movies, kidvid, even pilots that never got on the air — from nearly four decades. Data include principal players, credits, plots, year(s), b/w or color □ 204 SF authors: profiles, birth/death dates, major works, knowing comments on their styles □ Nearly 200 great photos □ SF awards — Hugo and Nebula □ Oscars in Space sci-fi Academy Award winners □ Data on sci-fi magazines and organizations — are you missing out on any? □ Theme and Theme Again: or, the plots and subjects that get used over and over □ 400 big 6 1/2 x 9 1/2

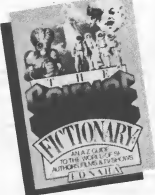
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included in future editions of *Anatomy of Wonder* might profit from *On Writing Science Fiction: The Editors Strike Back!* by George H. Scithers, Darrell Schweitzer, and John M. Ford (Owlswick Press, Philadelphia, \$17.50), in which three former editors of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* offer sensible, nuts-and-bolts advice on story construction and manuscript form, with half the book given over to a dozen sf stories, all first sales, chosen from Asimov's by way of illustration. Probably the book's two wisest suggestions appear in an appendix at the back: Le Guin's Rule for Writing SF—"If you want to write it, you gotta read it"—and Obis's Law: "Somebody else probably has the same idea—so (a) get started, (b) plan to do it better."

OLD MASTERS: Over the years, Owlswick has also been reprinting the works of Lord Dunsany. The latest such volume, *The Ghosts of the Heavyside Layer and Other Fantasmis* (\$20), abundantly illustrated by Tim Kirk, brings to light a number of rare and hitherto uncollected pieces—fourteen stories, nineteen essays, and two plays—by the Anglo-Irish fantasist (1878–1957), whose influence on other writers is today far greater than his own actual readership: a sad state of affairs, since Dunsany was one of the language's most accomplished stylists, the sort whose work deserves to be read aloud. Most of these pieces were written late in his career, but one finds many familiar Dunsanian themes: the love of nature; a hatred of the modern world's materialism, crowds, and pollution; and a lament for the loss of traditional beliefs and ancient magic. The narrator of one tale has this revealing exchange with a ghost:

"I am going," it said.

"Why?" I asked it.

"Times are changing," it said.

"The old firesides are altering, and they are poisoning the river, and the smoke of the cities is unwholesome, like your bread. I am going away among unicorns, griffons, and wyverns."

"But are there such things?"

I asked.

"There used to be," it replied.

But I was growing impatient at being lectured to by a ghost, and was

a little chilled by the mist.

"Are there such things as ghosts?" I asked then.

And a wind blew then, and the ghost was suddenly gone.

"We used to be," it sighed softly.

Mike Ashley is currently working on a biography of the incomparable Algernon Blackwood (1869–1951), whose celebrated story "The Willows" has long been considered, by Lovecraft and others, to be the single finest supernatural tale ever written. Meanwhile, devotees of this prolific writer—and collectors, in particular—might want the best available bibliography of his work, **Blackwood's Books**

(Hounslow Press, 124 Parkview Ave., Toronto M2N 3Y5, Canada; \$8.95 paperback). It's been compiled by Canadian sf/fantasy editor John Robert Colombo, who's added some notes on Blackwood's life, with particular attention to his travels in Canada and his lifelong fascination with mysticism, Theosophy, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and other occult pursuits. Colombo has also compiled an unusual fantasy anthology, *Friendly Aliens* (same publisher and price), thirteen weird tales, many of them classic, whose common denominators are their Canadian settings and the fact that the authors themselves are not Canadian—and are therefore inclined to view the North Woods, the Yukon, and the tundra's frozen wastes as a playground for the imagination. Among the authors represented: Blackwood, Shiel, Lovecraft, Merritt, Jack London, August Derleth, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. The Great White North, in their hands, is a place more of monsters than Molsons.

An F. Marion Crawford

Companion by John C. Moran (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, \$45) is a hefty 570-page guide to the life and works of an expatriate American writer (1854–1909) better known today for a few well-anthologized short stories—"The Screaming Skull," "For the Blood Is the Life," and "The Upper Berth" (which Lovecraft called "one of the most tremendous horror-stories in all literature")—than for the novels with exotic settings (such as the Arabian *Khaled*) and Italian romances that formed the large part of his fiction. In addition to prefatory essays by Edward Wagenknecht,



Russell Kirk, and Donald Sidney-Fryer, the book provides plot outlines of Crawford's forty novels, an index of characters and place-names, and a complete bibliography. It is clearly a labor of love.

Moran himself is the director of Nashville's F. Marion Crawford Memorial Society and editor of a fascinating literary annual, *The Romantist*. In its 1978 issue, an Ohioan named A. Reynolds Morse contributed a somewhat rueful essay on Matthew Phipps Shiel (1865–1947), a highly eccentric author little known today despite his extraordinary gifts as a storyteller. "No other modern writer has been so consistently 'rediscovered' as Shiel," Morse noted. "Yet bright as each new conflagration has seemed to flare, none has really inflamed the average reader." He listed some of Shiel's more illustrious proponents: Wells, Bennett, Machen, Wilde, Hammett, Hartley, and Carl Van Vechten, who wrote: "I do not recall the exact number of books by Shiel I had examined with mounting enthusiasm before I stumbled on *The Purple Cloud*, but I do remember that when, at one sitting, I had finished reading this extremely long biographical essays; photos of Shiel, his homes, book covers, and associates; a portrait of Shiel's collaborator and sometime executor, the poet John Galsworthy, whose final years were a series of unpaid debts, evictions, and drunken stupors; and A. Reynolds Morse's saga of "The Quest for Redonda" (also available separately in an oversize paperback, \$10), which recounts the history of the West Indian island off Montserrat where, as a child, Shiel was crowned "king" by his father, thus establishing a tongue-in-cheek literary tradition—rather like the novel at four A.M., I cried aloud with the morning stars." That reaction is

...y no means inappropriate; *The Purple Cloud* (1901)—the narrative of a polar explorer who returns to find himself the last man on earth—a spellbinding book, its language hypnotic and hallucinatory. Lovecraft called it "a veritably stupendous piece of work," and praised Shiel's story "The House of Sounds" for its utterly unique delirium of arctic wastes, titan seas, insane brazen towers, centuried malignity, frenzied waves and cataracts, and above all ideos, insistent, brain-petrifying, Pan-accursed cosmic SOUND... God! but after that story I shall never try to write another of my own. Shiel has done so much better than my best, that I am left breathless and inarticulate. And yet the man is virtually unknown in America—and almost so in his native Britain."

That need no longer be true. *The Purple Cloud* has been reprinted here often, most recently in a Warner paperback and a Gregg Press hardcover, the latter with an introduction by David Hartwell; and Arkham House (Sauk City, WI 53583) has published two hardcover Shiel collections, *Xelucha and Others* (\$40.25), containing most of the weird tales Lovecraft admired (the title story is one of Shiel's most linguistically dizzying), and *Prince Saleski and Cummings King Monk* (\$7.50), seven tales of detection in the manner of Poe's M. Dupin. And now, thanks to the same A. Reynolds Morse, Shiel aficionados can obtain an offprint of *The Purple Cloud's* original magazine serialization (a somewhat different version from the published novel), complete with illustrations, in *The Works of M.P. Shiel—Volume I: Writings* (JDS Books, Box 67 MCS, Dayton, OH 5402; \$25 ring binder, \$45 hardback). This ponderous 8½" x 11" cardstock also includes fifteen short stories and an earlier magazine serial, *The Empress of the Earth* (1898), an sf novel on one of Shiel's favorite themes, a future race war between China and the West. Shiel's political views—bizarre, Nietzschean, and, by today's standards, pretty unsavory—are detailed in *Volumes I and III: The Shielography* (updated together, \$75 ring binder, \$90 hardcover), along with an exhaustive bibliography; dozens of Baker Street Irregulars' contention that Sherlock Holmes was real—and

a line of "royal succession" that's carried on even today. JDS also distributes Shiel's recently discovered final novel, *The New King* (\$12 oversize paperback), a rambling philosophical work for confirmed Shielophiles only; and *The Rajah's Sapphire* (\$6 paperback), a novel of international intrigue, available in a beautiful little facsimile of the original 1896 edition.

PUZZLES: Name the three breeds of Hobbits. Who said, "The halflings are courteous folk, whatever else they may be"? Who drove the Dwarves from the Lonely Mountain? If you already know that the answers are, respectively, Fallowhides, Stoors, Harfoots; Faramir; and Smaug the dragon, then you're probably much too smart for *The Tolkien Quiz Book* by Nigel Robinson and Linda Wilson (St. Martin's, \$3.95 paperback), which asks—and answers—hundreds

of such questions. Warning: It helps to have a more-than-passing acquaintance with such Middle Earth languages as Quenya, Sindarin, Dwarfish, and the Black Speech.

POEMS: Two new collections from Donald M. Grant (West Kingston, RI 02892), both by veteran fantasy writers—*Creep to Death* by Joseph Payne Brennan (\$15), with spidery, Harry Clarke-ish illustrations by Jane F. Kendall, and *Heroes and Hobgoblins* by L. Sprague de Camp (\$20), with whimsical illustrations, six in color, by Tim Kirk (both books are signed by author and artist)—show two strikingly different approaches to poetry. Actually, de Camp prefers to call the hundred pieces collected here "light verse, or jingles if you prefer"; in a modest introduction he compares their composition to the solving of a crossword puzzle.



at this year's World Fantasy Convention in New Haven. It's recognition long overdue.

PICTURES: For head comic fans, *The Lowbrow Art of Robert Williams* (Rip Off Press, Box 14158, San Francisco 94114, \$10.95 paperback) is a mind-wrenching, eye-popping collection of savage, surreal, often scatological cartoons and paintings (sixteen reproduced in color) by the field's most intricate designer. He's the man who created Coochy Cooty, Muzzy the Dunce, Our Eventual Friend Happy Death, and an extremely graphic cartoon captioned, "Hey, Maw, the hogs ate the baby!!!" He also invented, as Gilbert Shelton's text puts it, "the ultimate in the intense, hard-to-make-out psychedelic style. Every detail seems to be made out of gleaming chrome." And pure gold.

—TK

Music

by Jack Sullivan

While working on this column, I recently asked a representative of Composers Recordings Incorporated (CRI), a company devoted to contemporary music, what new CRI records feature music of a fantastic, otherworldly nature. "But our whole line is like that," was his immediate reply. A flippant exaggeration, perhaps, but based on a significant truth: most worthwhile, emotionally vibrant music by living composers is ghostly and unearthly.

The most popular and frequently recorded of these composers is George Crumb. Eschewing the emotional variety found in most Western music, Crumb saturates every moment, every nuance of his music in a dark mysticism which is reflected in his titles, extra-musical programs, and bizarre instructions to performers. His string quartet, *Black Angels* (1971), has movement subtitles like "Night of the Electric Insect," "Dance Macabre," and "Lost Bells;" the four performers are instructed to play not only their traditional string instruments, but also tam-tams, maracas and crystal globes; they are also instructed to periodically chant mystical number sequences, and to affix their instruments with electronic pickups to project the loud passages until they reach "the threshold of pain." (George Crumb, "Black Angels," Concord String Quartet, Turnabout S-34610.)

In *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970), based on the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca, the mezzo-soprano is asked by the composer to chant "a kind of fantastic vocalise" into an amplified piano, producing "a shimmering aura of echoes." (George Crumb, "Ancient Voices of Children," Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Nonesuch H-71255.) An earlier Lorca setting, *Night Music I* (1963), spotlights the unearthly sound of a vibrating gong being slowly lowered into water, as the soprano sings of the glistening teeth of skulls and the "anguish of dark planets." (George Crumb, "Night Music I," George Crumb conducting, CRI 218; CRI records are hard to find, but a free mail-order catalogue is

available from 170 W. 74 Street, New York, NY, 10023.)

A more conventionally "beautiful" Crumb work is *Music of the Starry Night*, the evocative final piece in *Music for a Summer Evening*. This starry night glows with the surprisingly lovely sound of two amplified pianos covered inside with sheets of paper. (George Crumb, "Music for a Summer Evening," Gilbert Kalish, et. al., Nonesuch H-71311.) An excellent budget collection of Crumb's softer, more meditative works can be found on *Odyssey*, including *Dream Sequence* (1976), *Four Nocturnes* (1964), and *Lux Aeterna* (1971)—the latter to be performed by musicians wearing black masks and robes on a dark stage lit by a single candle. This music is colorful, introverted and often hypnotic, but listeners should be warned that its textures are rather thin ("Lux Aeterna," et. al., *Odyssey Y-35201*). Inordinately fond of fadeouts and silences, Crumb is a minimalist whose strength lies in evoking ghostly atmospheres rather than strong melodies or textures.

Another conjurer of mystical sounds is Toru Takemitsu, sometimes lazily labeled "the Japanese George Crumb." Actually, Takemitsu's music, despite its extraordinary delicacy, is less static and minimalistic than Crumb's—more sumptuous in textures and ideas. Known mainly to fantasy fans as the composer of the bewitching score to the horror film classic *Kwaidan*, Takemitsu has succeeded brilliantly in synthesizing the austere dignity of ancient Japanese ceremonial music with the harmonic and coloristic innovations of Western masters such as Debussy and Boulez. A marvelous introduction to Takemitsu can be heard in a recording by Tashi, a young chamber group for whom two of the works therein were originally written ("Tashi Plays Takemitsu," RCA AR1-3483). The most beautiful and rapturous work on this record is *Water Ways* (1978), with its shimmering harp glissandi and its remarkably liquid, wave-like counterpoint.

A more terse, cerebral world of ghostly sounds can be experienced in

Lukas Foss's masterpiece, *Time Cycle* (1961), four meditations on the mysterious fluidity of time, based on texts by Auden, Housman, Kafka and Nietzsche. Filled with bells, gongs, and clock-related chimings, *Time Cycle* has as its centerpiece a chilling setting of Housman's "When the Bells Justle:"

*When the bells justle in the tower
The hollow night amid
Then on my tongue the taste is sour
Of all I ever did.*

Foss brings all of his texts to life in a rich, magical amalgam of tonal and nontonal styles. Leonard Bernstein's famous recording of the work is still available (Lukas Foss, "Time Cycle," Adele Addison, Leonard Bernstein, Columbia Special Products CMS 6280). Both music and recording sound fresh and utterly new, as if they were composed and recorded only yesterday. For me, hearing this record again after a twenty-year gap is a haunting reminder of Foss's theme—the strangeness and relativity of time.

A more romantic, tonal, movie-like sound is available in the music of Alan Hovhaness, whose huge output is based on Eastern modes—everything from ancient Himalayan chant to medieval Armenian music. Unlike more experimental composers like Bartok and Ives, who fragment and distort old sounds into contemporary montages, Hovhaness expands these ancient tunes into long, sinuous melodies, subtly spiced by bitonal janglings and tinklings from exotic percussion instruments. Hovhaness's most soaring, visionary work is *Mysterious Mountain* (1955), available on a beautifully engineered late-fifties Chicago Symphony recording conducted by Fritz Reiner (Hovhaness, "Mysterious Mountain," Fritz Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, RCA LSC-2251). To Hovhaness, the *Mysterious Mountain* is "the phantom peak, unmeasured, thought to be higher than Everest, as seen from great distances by fliers in Tibet." Reiner manages to conjure a misty, ethereal sound that indeed suggests vast distances and heights. A superior high is also obtainable in

Hovhanness's *The Holy City* (Hovhanness, "The Holy City," Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, CRI 259) and Fourth Symphony (Hovhanness, Symphony No. 4, Eastman Wind Ensemble, Mercury 75010). In his typically eccentric notes to the majestic, hymn-like Fourth Symphony, Hovhanness complains: "I would prefer the massive free rhythm bell orgies of Zurich to the spineless glockenspiel chimes and vibraphones of our industrial orchestras. I would like to ring all the bells in the thousand towers of the lost Armenian city of Ani in wildly-clashing free rhythm." Hovhanness clearly has an obsession with the remote and the fantastic that his music—fortunately for us—never quite releases.

Those who are looking for something more aggressive, cacophonous and "modern" should seek out the fanatically complex works of Iannis Xenakis and the early works of Krzysztof Penderecki. Back in the sixties, the most popular composer of screamingly dissonant horror music was Penderecki, whose *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (now, amazingly, out of print) was a masterpiece of the genre. Recently, however, Penderecki has leaped onto the conservative, "neo-romantic" bandwagon, leaving the snarling outbursts of Xenakis at center stage. Both composers are featured on an early Nonesuch record conducted by Lukas Foss (Xenakis, "Akra," "Pithoprakta;" Penderecki, "De Natura Sonoris," Capriccio No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra," Nonesuch 71201).

Xenakis once likened his music to "the onset of madness, when a person suddenly realizes that an environment that had seemed familiar to him has now become altered in a profound, threatening sense." Nowhere is this mounting madness more intensely captured than in *Bohor I*, an electronic piece that transforms the most primitive materials—a Laotian mouth organ and some Oriental jewelry—into thousands of jangling, shattering particles of sound moving like stars against black, organ-like masses. (Xenakis, "Bohor I," Nonesuch 71246). When I heard the New York premiere of *Bohor I* some ten years ago, the violent ending lapsed not into silence but into a piercing

scream—the sound of a deranged woman who had apparently been screaming for some time but could not be heard, even slightly, over Xenakis's cosmic tornado of sound. Pierre Boulez once contemptuously dismissed electronic music as "the music of science fiction," but *Bohor I* is something higher: the music of cosmic horror.

Finally, I would like to recommend an absolutely essential record, *New Music for Organ* (Nonesuch 71260), featuring the most ghoulish, daring, and frightening sounds ever conceived for "the king of instruments." Side one offers William Bolcom's *Black Host*, a reenactment of a Black Mass and a musical rendering of the striking epigraph from Lord Russell: "In the daily lives of most men and women, fear plays a greater part than hope." Side two offers an even more delectable feast of horror: William Albright's *Night Procession*, *Toccata Satanique*, and *Last Rites*. *Night Procession*, the most evanescent of these nightmarish works, has an organ pedal sequence that is the most awesome, wall-shaking bass sound I have ever heard on a record. My cats, whose ears are otherwise jaded by now, still scramble under the couch when I put this one on. The listener who experiences these incomparably atmospheric works will surely want to order the harder-to-find Albright recordings from CRI (William Albright, "Organ Works," CRI 277; "Piano Works," CRI 449). Like Crumb, Takemitsu, and Xenakis, Albright can be depended on for superior weird music.

This article, alas, is the final regular music column in the Other Dimensions series, a journey which has taken us from medieval masses to the music of our own time. It is my hope that this exploration has enabled listeners to begin building a basic library of spectral masterpieces, for this tradition offers some of the richest and most transporting experiences in Western music. In the future, this column will return on an occasional basis, focusing on specific sonic adventures such as the mystical music of Messiaen and the film scores of Bernard Herrmann.

Updates and corrections: Several significant recent recordings have come to my attention since deadlines for various columns. Angel has just

released an awesome new digital version of the Berlioz *Requiem*, conducted with a fiery conviction by Andre Previn that surely supercedes all modern versions (Berlioz, "Requiem," Previn, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, Angel DSB 3907). Two other attractive Previn recordings are of the Shostakovich Fourth and Sixth Symphonies (Shostakovich, Symphonies Nos. 4 and 6, Previn, Angel S-37284 and S-37026, respectively). I didn't mention the Sixth in my June column, but I should have, even though only the first movement is truly spectral ("A vast dark planet" moving on its axis, writes critic Robert Layton). Another Shostakovich item to look for is the new Bernstein version of the Fourteenth Symphony, forthcoming from Columbia. Columbia also offers a new, definitive Boulez version of Berg's *Lulu Suite* (Berg, "Lulu Suite," Boulez, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Columbia M35849)—for those who find the idea of the unabridged *Lulu*, a four-hour atonal opera, a bit daunting.

Musicologist Samuel Moyer has written a long, erudite letter urging me to mention the "austere, terrifying" music of two modern French composers, Arthur Honegger and Henri Dutilleul. By coincidence, I had already reserved tickets for a live performance of Honegger's *Liturgical Symphony*; my experience there certainly confirmed Moyer's judgment.

Another thoughtful letter came from rock musician Greg Yaskovich, a member of the "space rock" group Mars Everywhere. Yaskovich hoped that I would mention, among others, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage, and Morton Subotnik. I failed to mention these composers simply because—with the exception of Stockhausen's meditative *Stimmung* and the very early music of Cage and Subotnik—I don't care much for their music and therefore find it hard to recommend.

Finally, a correction from a rather charming misprint in the March issue: Arnold Schoenberg wrote that "each sigh" in Webern can be extended into a novel—not each "sigh." Webern, a highly visual composer, may indeed evoke "sights," but the sighs are what move us. **W**

Etc.



TZ IN THE HEREAFTER

Well, you always knew you'd find a Twilight Zone on the Other Side. Our thanks to John H. Hurney

of Buffalo for submitting this from the May 2 Buffalo News.

DREYFUSS TAKE NOTE

The Black Book of Clark Ashton Smith (Arkham House, Sauk City, WI 52583) presents the California fantasy writer's notes for future stories. One such item uncannily anticipates a scene from Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*:

Man walking along road at night sees road and signs lighten before him, as if from headlights of auto approaching from behind. Strange, unearthly machine appears; man is caught into machine, carried to unknown planet or dimension.

DUFFY



'TWILIGHT ZONE' FILM

Rumors have been circulating for months now, but at last the word is out: a *Twilight Zone* film is currently in development at Warner Bros., and three top-name directors have been linked with the project—Steven Spielberg (whose *E.T.* and *Pollergeist* are spotlighted in this issue), Joe Dante (*The Howling*), and John Landis (*The Blues Brothers*, *An American Werewolf in London*). One possible format now being considered is that each would direct a segment of a three-part "anthology"

film. One of the stories would be original, perhaps originating with Landis, but the other two may be based upon classic episodes from the *Twilight Zone* television series. Likely choices: "It's a Good Life," Jerome Bixby's story (adapted by Rod Serling for tv) of a little boy who becomes a murderous tyrant, and "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," which Richard Matheson may adapt for film from his own *Twilight Zone* script. We'll be bringing you the details in future issues of TZ.

TZ IN SPORTS



by BRUCE HAMMOND



... submitted by Lloyd Penney, Toronto, Canada

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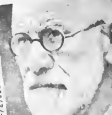
Towards a Poetics of the Fantastic
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 Hieronymus Bosch and Francisco Goya y Lucientes
 The Atavistic Beast: Kafka's "The Animal in the
 Synagogue"
 Mbari: Spirit House of the Oweri Ibo (Nigeria)
 Williams Blake's Vision of America
 The Imaginary Peasant
 Mysteries of the Broad Backed Church: T.S. Eliot's
 "The Hippopotamus"
 A Concept of Birth and Rebirth: "Somewhere in Time"
 Aubrey Beardsley: Art and Fantasy
 Metamorphosis by Gold: Money and Man in
 Renaissance Drama
 How is Time Travel Possible?
 Fantasy and Self-Destruction in Truman Capote
 Mussolini as Dante's Vergil: Anatomy of a Parody
 Fantasy Sex-Role Reversals in Grimm's Fairy Tales
 "Horror Shows, Inside and Outside My Skull":
 Theater and Life in Tennessee Williams' *The Two
 Character Play*
 Dracula's Progeny: Consanguinary Ties
 What is a Numina?
 The Mystical Cosmos of Edwin Muir
 Humor and Fantasy in Jack Hodgins' *Resurrection of
 Joseph Bourne*
 Between Two Merlins: The Quest of a Modern Arthur
 in John Le Carré's "Smiley" Trilogy
 Social Criticism and Fantasy in *The Arabian Nights*:
 "The Envious Sisters"
 The Dragon is Not Dead: He Is Alive and Well in the
Earthsea Trilogy
 Strangers in Estranged Lands: Mormonism in Science
 Fiction
 The Romantic Myth and Transcendence: A Feminist
 Interpretation of the Kirk/Spook Bond

TZ IN HISTORY

placed him in the Twilight Zone in an article about dreams and their relation to health.

Trauma in the twilight zone

One patient woke up & had a heart attack



FREEZE!

Two enterprising Connecticut youths seem to have taken a cue from Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* episode "The After Hours." The following item, from the *New London Day*, was reprinted in April's *Yankee* magazine:

Two boys hiding in the Sears, Roebuck store after hours tried unsuccessfully to outwit police by

posing as mannequins. The boys were found frozen in position in the boys' clothing department, pretending to be mannequins, when police officers arrived about 10 P.M. They might have been passed by if it were not for the fact that one was clutching a radio and cassette player in his hands.

WANTED!
... items for this

We want items for this page: bizarre newspaper stories (please send original clipping for verification), strange photos, startling quotes, and surprising references to "the Twilight Zone" in print. For each item we use, we'll send you a poster of TZ's Maximilian, who requires neither Friskies nor kitty litter.

Send contributions to:

Etc.
TZ Publications, Inc
800 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
cartoons

We also want cartoons with a *Twilight Zone* twist, and we'll pay \$50 for them. Send your work (with a SASE) to our Cartoon Editor at the above address.





Douglas Heyes:

Behind the Scenes at 'The Twilight Zone'

THIS INVENTIVE DIRECTOR TURNED MEN INTO DEVILS, MADE 'INVADERS' WALK, AND HID THOSE UGLY FACES FROM 'THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER.'

Interviewer **Ben Herndon** reports:

Last year in Los Angeles, as part of tv station KTLA's annual Thanksgiving Day marathon of Twilight Zone classics, director Douglas Heyes was well represented—and with good reason. Heyes directed a total of nine shows during Twilight Zone's first two seasons—among them such celebrated episodes as "Eye of the Beholder," "The Invaders," "The Howling Man," and "Nervous Man in a Four-Dollar Room"—and worked with three of the fantasy field's most imaginative writers: Rod Serling, Richard Matheson, and Charles Beaumont.

Filming Twilight Zone on MGM's legendary lot, as well as filming Thriller at Universal, gave Heyes unusually free rein for a tv director, but his experience extended to other kinds of projects. He wrote as well as directed a number of the original Maverick television shows, and also wrote and directed Universal's 1966 version of the adventure classic Beau Geste, starring

Guy Stockwell, Doug McClure, Leslie Nielsen, and Telly Savalas. "Today," Heyes notes, "most of the swashbucklers, and even the westerns, are set in outer space." After the termination of Twilight Zone, Heyes wrote the screenplays for The Groundstar Conspiracy and Ice Station Zebra, and he launched another Serling project, the regularly broadcast series Night Gallery, in a writing/directing capacity. Probably Heyes's most ambitious project to date has been writing and directing the ten-hour-long television epic Captains and the Kings (in which Richard Matheson, incidentally, portrays President Garfield).

You can get an idea of Heyes's early enthusiasms when you consider that his first job at age seventeen was as a cartoonist at the Walt Disney Studios. "I was what they called an 'in-between,' " Heyes recalls. "After the chief animator drew the extremes of the action, the in-betweener took those two ends and filled in the rest. I learned a lot about visualization and

motion picture technique, because everything at Disney was storyboarded. I started thinking of drama in terms of what you could see, and I still try to think of how many scenes will play visually. And, of course, that's what I loved about Twilight Zone."

Heyes extended his drawing skills with a daily cartoon strip called Strange as It Seems, wrote his first novel, The Kiss-Off, and finally got his first big break under Arthur Ripley at Sovereign Productions writing half-hour teleplays for G.E. Theatre in the early 1950s. "Ripley made me a director on my second half-hour show," says Heyes. "At the time, I didn't have as much experience on a sound stage as the people who had taken the Universal Studios tour!"

Heyes has recently completed The Fill, his third suspense novel. When I interviewed him in his office—in reality a study/library/museum that he shares with a fascinating collection of library treasures, exhaustive cinema

Douglas Heyes

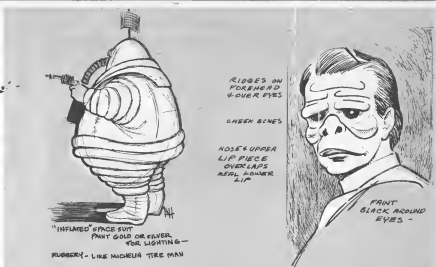
research material, antique weaponry, and a Maltese Falcon—Heyes proved an affable and enthusiastic raconteur as he and I discussed the stuff that dreams are made of.

TZ: Some of your most imaginative work on *The Twilight Zone* seems designed to be seen alone during a storm at midnight. Particularly in "The Howling Man," with the eerie wails echoing through the remote old hermitage and the hallucinations of the main character, you relied heavily on a gothic ambience and tilted, Germanic-style camera angles. Where did you draw that imagery from?

Heyes: I think I was very much interested in the bizarre, the supernatural. When I was a young kid I was very influenced by films like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. I loved *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. One that influenced me on "Howling Man" was the 1935 *Werewolf of London*, with Henry Hull. In that, he did a slow, moving transition into the werewolf which I had never seen before. He was walking up a staircase, and as he would move behind pieces of the set, he would come out from behind the next piece of set looking slightly more advanced in his transformation. I'd seen that as a kid, and I always said, "That's the way to do it."

TZ: When the howling man, Robin Hughes, escapes from a locked cell in the monastery and walks across a corridor to disappear in a flash of smoke, he becomes more Luciferian with each stride until, by the time he reaches the window, he has become the Devil himself. Wasn't the task of portraying the Prince of Darkness rather a tall order?

Heyes: Well, we did the very conventional Satan thing. We went deliberately to the most conventional-looking demon we could get—with the big collar and cape and everything. Charles Beaumont had originally written it as a short story, and then he wrote it as a *Twilight Zone*. In the published short story, the man lets the Devil go, then suddenly realizes what he's done and tries to catch him—and all he catches is a cloven hoof. That was the way Chuck wrote it, but I said, "I think you have to see more than that. That isn't really enough to convince the audience that they really saw the Devil." So I went the other way—stronger visually, I thought—and over Chuck's objections I did that transformation scene.



Heyes's sketch for an invader from Earth, prototype for the puppets used in the *Twilight Zone* episode "The Invaders."

Heyes's makeup design for William Gordon, the doctor in *Twilight Zone*'s "The Eye of the Beholder."

TZ: How was it possible for the howling man to change into the Devil while moving?

Heyes: I had him walking very fast down a corridor in the old monastery. The cameras were on the outside of the columns and arches along the corridor, and I had him make the entire walk at the same speed every time there was a makeup change. And we photographed the entire walk at exactly the same dolly speed for every makeup change. In editing, we could cut from one makeup change to the next in the middle part of each column, where it would be dark. At the end of the corridor he went out the window with a big puff of smoke.

TZ: At around this time weren't you brewing several episodes of gothic television with Boris Karloff on *Thriller*?

Heyes: *Thriller* was not a scary show when it first began. The first five or six episodes were gangster stories, crime stories, adventure stories—and the series was not doing well. I was called over to Revue, Universal's television department, and I was called into a conference with Alan Miller, who ran the department, and Hubbell Robinson, who produced *Thriller*. They asked me what was wrong with *Thriller*. Why wasn't it getting the good ratings? To me, it seemed like a terribly obvious answer. When you say, "Boris Karloff presents *Thriller*," then people believe you're going to show them something scary, something spooky. Something indigenous to Karloff's work on the silver screen. They asked me to write and direct one which had those elements in it, to see if that was really what the public wanted. So I wrote and directed a thing called "The Purple Room," and I threw in everything. I threw in ghosts and people rising from the

dead and secret passages and portraits that moved. I threw in *everything*! Clanking chains, candles that blew out—everything in the genre. The ratings began to rise after that.

TZ: Your second *Thriller*, "The Hungry Glass," starring William Shatner and your wife, Joanna Heyes, was also in the supernatural genre—an old house where people are spirited away into haunted mirrors and lured to suicide by ghostly images in windows.

Heyes: That came from a prose poem by Robert Bloch—a mood piece. I wrote the teleplay and directed it. Most people that remember *Thriller* remember that episode. A lot of people told me that, for weeks afterward, they couldn't look in their mirrors. They were afraid of their mirrors.

TZ: And that was the same year that another story of Bloch's made people afraid to take showers! Your final *Thriller* was an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's "Premature Burial" with a teleplay by William Gordon, based on your adaptation. You directed Gordon and Karloff in that one, didn't you?

Heyes: Yes, Karloff actually played the lead in that one. I understood the magic that he had when I was directing him, because there were scenes that were on the borderline of the absurd, but when he did them they would suddenly become beautiful and believable—because he believed what he was doing. Everybody called him "Dear Boris." It was like one word. He was terribly patient and friendly. He'd sit around on the set and once in a while he would say, "My, my, this business does eat into your day." That was as close as he ever got to a complaint.

TZ: Since Karloff was the show's host, what kind of tone did you set in writing and directing the introductions

he did on each episode?

Heyes: On the early *Thrillers*, Karloff didn't even introduce them like Karloff. He looked like a respectable old English gentleman sitting in his library. I had him take a different, more Karloffian, attitude. On "The Premature Burial," I introduced him coming out of a coffin.

TZ: At the beginning of *Twilight Zone's* second season Rod Serling began to appear regularly on camera with his odd, inimitable opening narrations. Did you see this as a way of adding another dimension to Serling's link with *The Twilight Zone*?

Heyes: I liked to tie the *Twilight Zone* introductions into the show. If I possibly could get hold of Rod—if he wasn't in New York or somewhere—I would try to get him in with the actors and with the people on the set. I thought that Rod's appearance in those things was part—really *was* *The Twilight Zone*. Where he appeared from and how he appeared was important. For example, in "Dust" we worked out the thing where they were testing the gallows.

TZ: In what could be the archetypal Serling narration appearance! You showed some men atop a newly constructed gibbet tying the hangman's noose around a couple of heavy flour sacks. The trap door is sprung and—

Heyes: —the sacks flop down—*BAM!*—with a tremendous impact (*Heyes bangs the top of his desk thunderously*), and they hit the end of the rope. And as we pan down to it, we bring in Rod Serling, who's standing there at the base of the gallows—

TZ: Naturally.

Heyes: —and he starts talking. And in "The Eye of the Beholder," which is played mostly with shadows and people moving, people who you never saw, we had done some shooting with the shadows of various unseen people, and then we see *another* shadow coming down the hospital corridor, and it turns out to be Rod's shadow, followed by Rod himself.

TZ: "... because this isn't just a hospital, and patient 307 is not just a woman. This happens to be—"

Heyes: "—the *Twilight Zone*." I mean, where he appeared from and how he appeared was important. I had fun thinking of the ways to bring Rod into those.

TZ: The episodes you directed represented the work of three writers in addition to Serling: Charles Beaumont (story and teleplay for "Elegy" and "The Howling Man"), Richard Matheson (story for Serling teleplay "And When the Sky Was Opened" and teleplay for "The Invaders"), Robert Presnell, Jr. (teleplay for John Collier's "The Chaser"), with Serling contributing "The After Hours," "Nervous Man in a Four-Dollar Room," "The Eye of the Beholder," and "Dust." With all the bewildering plots and premises these four consistently imaginative writers provided, was it difficult to maintain your own directorial style and imprint?

Heyes: One of the interesting things about working on the show was that Rod encouraged you to do whatever you thought would be imaginative with his scripts. And because he encour-

aged it, we would break our asses to think of something. I was able to try all kinds of things that I had always wanted to experiment with, to see if they'd work cinematically. So I generally chose the scripts that I directed on *Twilight Zone* for the problems that were involved. The scripts never told you how to do the trick, and sometimes you would have to invent how this would come to pass. You know—how the little people would run around in "The Invaders" or whatever.

TZ: Your second *Twilight Zone* dealt with a unique theme: three lost astronauts with a wish that comes fatally true.

Heyes: That was "Elegy," by Chuck Beaumont. They had made a graveyard of this asteroid, and people up there were suspended in scenes which represented their ambition. If a guy wanted to be elected governor, he was suspended in a scene in which he was being elected governor. And the big trick was to use these crowds of thirty to forty people—motion picture extras—and not have them move. I decided that this was impossible, that they would *have* to move a little if they were human. You just don't take people off the street and expect them to totally freeze. But they could stand *reasonably* still, so I decided that the camera always had to move while these people were standing still. That way, if you saw any slight movement, you'd think it was the camera's fault, not theirs. You never had a chance to analyze whether these people were standing absolutely still. That was why I took that episode—to see if it would work.

TZ: Serling's script for "Nervous Man in a Four-Dollar Room" set up the task of filming "a strange and mortal combat between a man and himself." It was what producer Buck Houghton used to call a "closet show": actor Joe Mantell alone in a cheap hotel room with only his bitterly menacing alter-ego reflected in the room's mirrors.

Heyes: "Nervous Man" was a challenge because I had always wanted to do a *Prisoner of Zenda*-type dual role with the same actor playing both parts. But instead of doing it with a split screen or over another actor's shoulder the easy way, I wanted to do it the hard way—with rear projection.

TZ: Near the top of the show Serling strolls on camera against an overhead shot of what he describes as "a cheap hotel room that is in reality the out-



Despite tipping his hand, Heyes seems to be cleaning out Bart and Bret Maverick (Jack Kelly and James Garner) in a friendly game on the set, with Roscoe Ates kibbitzing. The first *Maverick* episode Heyes wrote, "The Quick and the Dead," was nominated for a Writers Guild award.

Douglas Heyes

skirts of the *Twilight Zone*." This was the first time on the shows you directed that the audience both saw and heard him.

Heyes: Yes, I remember that, as a matter of fact, because we had the rear projection there all the time, and when Rod came down to do his narration, we projected that shot.

TZ: How did you use that process for Mantell's roles?

Heyes: First we photographed every part of Joe Mantell's performance that was in the mirror, and then later he played against himself in rear projection. So when we were photographing the mirror stuff, we also had another actor playing out front who was making Joe's moves, so that Joe in the mirror was actually looking in the direction where Joe the actor would be later, when I photographed it for the second time.

TZ: Who played the ghost stand-in that we never saw?

Heyes: We had another actor, Brian Hutton, who wanted to learn about directing, play the other end of all the scenes. He actually had both parts, but his role was completely cut out. We used him so that Joe could actually play the scene to another actor. Hutton was always off camera. When it became rear projection, Joe was speaking to himself, because we'd cut out the Hutton part. His lines were erased from the soundtrack. It was a totally thankless task. Hutton eventually went on to become a director; he did *Where Eagles Dare*.

TZ: Then he really had a big part in the show.

Heyes: Yes, he played everything that Joe Mantell played—he just played the end that was cut out. In that way Joe was able to give a real performance.

TZ: Not all of the episodes you directed were concerned with capturing such vivid imagery as demonic transfiguration, fantasy graveyards, or miracles at hangings. "The Chaser" was a simple story about the imprudent use of an over-the-counter love potion.

Heyes: True, it had no particularly *Twilight Zone* scene in it. In the original script, the man who is trying to buy a love potion simply goes to a man sitting behind a desk and he tells him what he wants. The man gives him the usual cautions, pulls the potion out of the desk drawer, and sells it to him. It was dramatic in terms of what was happening, but it was not a visual *Twilight Zone* kind of thing. I said, "Let's do something with that



Joanna Heyes and William Gordon In full makeup based on Heyes's concept.

scene." It was really the *Twilight Zone*, I decided, because the hero departs from reality to go in to see this old gremlin, Professor A. Daemon, played by John McIntire. I said, "Let's make that the *Twilight Zone*." So we built a very long, narrow set which was very high, with lots of bookcases. We didn't put a back on these bookcases; instead we covered the backs with gauze and lit from behind, so that the books stood out in relief against light—which is something they never do in a bookcase. But you don't think about that because it's in the *Twilight Zone* and you accept these weird things. But that subliminally made the whole scene crazy. And the interesting thing was that on *The Twilight Zone*, Buck Houghton, production manager Ralph Nelson, and Rod all said, "Yeah, let's do it that way!" Anyplace else, people would

have said, "Why? Why? Why?"

TZ: The scenes you've mentioned from "The Chaser," "The Howling Man," and "Elegy" showed that you liked to use a moving camera. You set the definitive standard for that type of fluid-motion shooting and connected it with an "avoidance" approach when you filmed "The Eye of the Beholder." Heyes: "Beholder" presented a problem of how to avoid the faces of the doctors and nurses—how to keep the secret. You could have done it all with inserts, but that would have made the audience suspicious. What I had to do was try and hold their attention and yet not let them see any faces—without having the audience say, "Hey, something's wrong. They're not showing the faces." In other words, there is constantly a very subtle camera movement, so that you're not aware of the fact that when

somebody turns around, for example, and starts to turn towards you, someone else walks in front of the camera just at the moment he's turning so that you don't actually see the front of his face. I was trying very hard to make it look like I *wasn't* trying to do what I was doing! With the woman's face under the bandages, I tried to suggest that she couldn't see them, that this was her vision. She didn't know what they looked like; she could only hear them around her. And I think it worked visually. She isn't see-



Joanna Heyes in a more flattering photo from the *Twilight Zone* years.

ing, so we're not seeing them yet. When I watch that episode now—and I've seen it a few times recently—I'm very pleased with the way the camera enhances the effect I was after. By now, of course, everybody knows what the trick is.

TZ: But the desired shock effect is still achieved, even if one has seen the episode a number of times. How do you rate this particular show?

Heyes: That was great fun. In fact, I think that was my favorite of the ones I directed on *Twilight Zone*. I look at it now and enjoy the camera work and the tricks that we did.

TZ: How do you cast for a film where the actors' and actresses' faces aren't seen until the end—and then only under that grotesque makeup?

Heyes: The whole thing is almost a radio show. Up to a certain point late

in the story, you're not seeing anyone's face, so the voices are going to be the most important thing. I had the idea that the voices of these monster people would be very sympathetic. Rod was surprised at that. He had not intended them to be that way, but he liked it. So I interviewed the actors for that show without ever seeing them. I sat in a room with my back to the door. They'd come in, and I'd read the part with them and listen only to their voices. I picked the people with the most sympathetic voices I could get. If we are going to believe that these people are the norm, then they have to sound like nice people.

The opposite is also true. Under the bandages, I wanted a voice that suggested it could belong to an ugly person. I wanted a voice with character, harshness, and timbre. So we used a radio actress named Maxine Stuart, a marvelous actress, and she played the part of Janet Tyler under the bandages. Later, when we unwrapped the bandages, Donna Douglas emerged, so the part was actually played by two actresses. I thought we were going to use Maxine's voice afterward as well, dubbing Donna after the bandages came off. But Donna was there throughout all the shooting, watching everything and listening, and she surprised me. When it came time to do the unwrapping scene, she had learned the vocal intonations and did her own dialogue sounding just like Maxine Stuart.

TZ: What was your inspiration for the makeup that the hospital staff all wore?

Heyes: When designing that makeup, we were trying to make them grotesque but also not unsympathetic. When the characters do show up and you finally see them, they're not hideous-looking things, just kind of pathetic and strange-looking. They had sympathetic eyes—their real eyes. At MGM, William Tuttle had just done a movie called *The Time Machine* in which he did the makeup for the Morlocks. We had the problem in "The Eye of the Beholder" of creating a race of people who were all similar in a way, because one of the themes in "Beholder" was that everyone should conform to an image—glorious conformity. So I talked to Bill about the Morlocks and said, "Do something like them." First I drew a man and said, "Why don't you take these guys and give them some distinctive features,

and then we have to distort them somehow—they have to look like mutants of some kind." Bill was marvelous—a master. He could do anything you asked him to do.

TZ: Wasn't your wife, Joanna, cast as one of the nurses?

Heyes: Yes. And when she came on the set with the full outfit on, all the makeup and everything, I glanced over and said, "Hi, honey, shouldn't you be in makeup?" The day did not go well from that point forward.

TZ: Your last *Twilight Zone* was the celebrated Richard Matheson story about the deadly peril of space travel. Agnes Moorehead encounters a couple of little invaders who dock their flying saucer on her roof and proceed to terrorize her at length.

Heyes: The reason we cast Aggie for that part in "The Invaders" was because she had done a very famous radio show called "Sorry, Wrong Number" in which she talks constantly. A tour de force of one woman talking—one voice, nobody else. When this part on "The Invaders" came up and the woman was not going to talk at all—there was no dialogue for her—I said, "This will be the opposite side of the coin. Let's get Aggie Moorehead."

TZ: Since she had no dialogue, how did she approach the part?

Heyes: It turned out that she had been a student of the mime Marcel Marceau. She chose to play the part like an animal under attack. Her performance built beautifully and got more and more animalistic as she was being attacked. She made sounds when angry and whimpered when hurt, but she never uttered a word.

TZ: Had you originally planned to use little puppets as the invaders?

Heyes: No, they thought they might do rear projection or build big sets and have real people do them—the kind of photography they did on *Dr. Cyclops*. **TZ:** You thought having them physically on the set with her was a better idea?

Heyes: Yes, because in having the little characters play in the scene with her, she could actually grab hold of them, throw 'em into the fireplace, see one up on the window ledge and give it a hit, and so forth. It was better than cutting away or doing it with trick photography. So we didn't use special effects after the fact.

TZ: How were the invaders given movement?

Heyes: I designed the characters—

Douglas Heyes

drew them—and William Tuttle built them out of a latex-type rubbery plastic material. The whole thing was a hollow shell. They made a model of the character, and then they cast a number of them. We cut them up the back so I could actually get my hand and fingers inside. I had a black sleeve on so you couldn't see my arm against dark backgrounds. If I put my fingers in their arms, I could move their hands; if I put my fingers in their legs, I could walk them. I just couldn't walk them and move their hands at the same time. I had a little battery thing in my other hand with all kinds of wires attached to it. I could shoot the ray guns they were holding in their hands by pushing a little button, and the gun would light up.

TZ: Since it was basically a one-woman show, did you rehearse her alone or with the puppets?

Heyes: We rehearsed with them, oh, yeah, because I needed rehearsal too. My fingers were in there acting along with Aggie. We rehearsed long sequences, since I had nothing really to cut to except, once in a while, to the little men. I was always on Aggie—it was all her and no cuts. I think I only delivered seven or eight pieces of film at the end there. They were long five- or six-minute takes where we just stayed on Aggie.

TZ: What was your design concept for the invaders' physical appearance?

Heyes: The whole idea was to make the spacesuit grotesque enough to disguise their humanity and yet to be able to say afterwards, "Well, they were human." I had to make them look as if we didn't know they were earthmen, so I said, "Let's give them a shapeless kind of look." That led to the idea of the inflated spacesuit. I got the idea from the little Michelin tire man.

In other words, the idea was to always disguise their physiques so that later you could look back and say, "They didn't mislead us. It could have been men in there." But while you're looking at the show you're not thinking "men," you're thinking something else. I didn't want it to be a conventional spacesuit similar to what we'd seen earthmen wearing, because that would give it away, too. Frequently with *The Twilight Zone* it was important to plan what the audience's impressions were going to be after the surprise ending. The big thrust on that show was to have everything

make sense after the fact.

TZ: Including the fact that nothing in her farmhouse, including herself, was of Earth?

Heyes: Yes, everything was kept to the simplest. There were no Scotch plaid curtains, no French Provincial furniture, no venetian blinds. There were only things that would, in effect, be a shelter if the race of people up there were humanlike. While you were watching you had to think, "This is Earth."

TZ: At the end, when she smashes the saucer, we see that the ship was the U.S. Air Force's first space probe. Aggie turns out to be a gigantic alien, while the invaders from outer space were earthmen all the time, not Martians or Venusians or whatever.

Heyes: I think that Matheson has said that he was disappointed in them because they weren't scary-looking enough. But again, my whole thrust on that show was to have it make sense after the fact. You had to be able to say, "Yeah, they could've been earthmen wearing little inflated spacesuits." That's why they were that strange globular shape—because they weren't supposed to look like anything specific.

TZ: So in "The Invaders," you not only directed the episode but operated the invader puppets, too.

Heyes: Yes, I had done puppet shows since I was a kid. And that's also me at the end. I'm the only voice heard in that episode.

TZ: You mean, when the last astronaut/invader radios a warning back to Earth?

Heyes: It's me saying, "There are giants here. Turn back..." and so forth. Because it was actually me as the invaders.

TZ: How would you classify the types of episodes you directed for *The Twilight Zone*?

Heyes: *Twilight Zone* was not a science fiction show—it was a fantasy show. And it was not a series so much as it was an anthology. Now, those fantasy themes are timeless. They aren't dated by changing conditions in the world. Imagination doesn't change. On the other hand, you can only hold a fantasy idea for about half an hour. After half an hour you have to get heavy hardware into it. *Twilight Zone* was very clear-cut, clean-cut stuff. I tried not to leave special effects for later, with the result that when the cutter got it, the effect was



Heyes with his son, Douglas Heyes, Jr., on the set of the *Twilight Zone* episode "Dust." The younger Heyes today writes for television.

already there on the film. Most of my effects were done right there in the camera—on the set. *Twilight Zone* made it possible to do that. They encouraged you to give your best. Many of the things I tried would not have been possible in any other atmosphere, but on *The Twilight Zone* I had this freedom—thanks, mainly, to Buck Houghton and Rod. I sat in on every cutting session. They worked right with you on the cutting, and it came out the way you wanted it. I was spoiled early on because, both on *Maverick* and *Twilight Zone*, producer Roy Huggins and Rod encouraged me to do everything I could.

TZ: Tell us about your more recent projects.

Heyes: Taylor Caldwell's *Captains and the Kings* was an enormous project—ten hours—and I wrote and directed that. I found myself writing these long forms for television, and I decided, "Why am I doing this? Why aren't I writing a novel for myself?" It had been too long since I'd written a novel, so I took two years off. I just finished it, and my agent keeps saying, "When are you going to go back to work?" I feel that I have been working for the last two years. I once tried writing a book while I was also doing movies and television. It doesn't work.

Having completed that clears the decks for whatever I'm going to do next. This'll be my third book, and it's been a long time between them. This one, *The Kill*, is a mystery/suspense piece.

Directing is a very physical job, and it's also a social job. You're communicating directly with people, which you don't do when you're writing. When you're writing, you're all alone in here with a typewriter. I once did a movie called *The Lonely Profession*—and this is it. Writing ten-hour things like *Captains and the Kings*, it was a long time between talking to people!



THE

by Edgar Allan Poe

TWO MASTERS OF THE
A TALE OF ISOLATION.

INTRODUCTION

The *Lighthouse* is probably the last story Edgar Allan Poe wrote, and he died before he could complete it. The manuscript pages were scattered, one going into a private collection where it remained until 1919, the others preserved by the family of Poe's literary executor and printed in an appendix to Professor Woodberry's *Life of Poe* in 1909. Woodberry is responsible for giving the tale its title; Poe himself had left the heading blank.

Even after the story had been rediscovered and its sections printed separately, the complete

LIGHTHOUSE

Poe and Robert Bloch

MACABRE IN A POSTHUMOUS COLLABORATION:
HORROR, AND THE HUMAN WILL.

text was never published as a unit until Professor Thomas O. Mabbott assembled it in 1942. And it was almost a decade later, after reading my Poe pastiche, *The Man Who Collected Poe*, that Professor Mabbott wrote to me about *The Lighthouse*. Did I happen to know this story? If not, would I care to read it? And if I found the tale intriguing, would I perhaps try my hand at completing it?

As a lifelong reader and admirer of Poe, I couldn't resist. And thus it was, more than a century after Poe's death, that I found myself collaborating with him. In order to do so I had to analyze his style and adapt myself

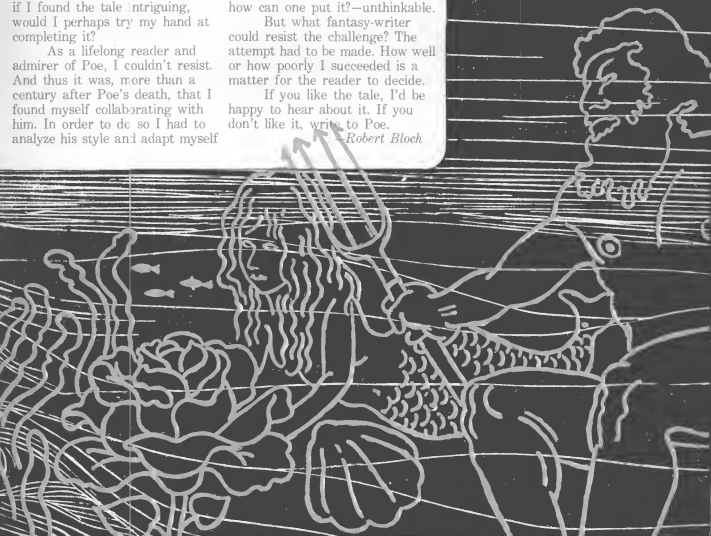
to it. Equally important was an analysis of his story-content; on the basis of what he'd written I had to anticipate that which he had left unwritten. How did he intend to develop his plot? And what resolution would he have had in mind for the ending?

Trying to write like Poe was presumptuous enough on my part; trying to *think* like Poe was—how can one put it?—unthinkable.

But what fantasy-writer could resist the challenge? The attempt had to be made. How well or how poorly I succeeded is a matter for the reader to decide.

If you like the tale, I'd be happy to hear about it. If you don't like it, write to Poe.

—Robert Bloch



THE LIGHTHOUSE

January 1, 1796

This day—my first on the lighthouse—I make this entry in my diary, as agreed on with DeGrät. As regularly as I *can* keep the journal, I will—but there is no telling what may happen to a man all alone as I am—I may get sick or worse . . .

So far well! The cutter had a narrow escape—but why dwell on that, since I am *here*, all safe? My spirits are beginning to revive already, at the mere thought of being—for once in my life at least—thoroughly *alone*; for, of course, Neptune, large as he is, is not to be taken into consideration as “society.” Would to heaven I had ever found in “society” one half as much *faith* as in this poor dog; in such case I and “society” might never have parted—even for a year. . . .

What most surprises me is the difficulty DeGrät had in getting me the appointment—and I a noble of the realm! It could not be that the Consistory had any doubt of my ability to manage the light. *One* man has attended it before now—and got on quite as well as the three that are usually put in. The duty is a mere nothing; and the printed instructions are as plain as possible. It would never have done to let Orndoff accompany me. I should never have made any way with my book as long as he was within reach of me, with his intolerable gossip—not to mention that everlasting meerschaum. Besides, I wish to be *alone*. . . .

It is strange that I never observed, until this moment, how dreary a sound that word has—“alone”! I could half fancy there was some peculiarity in the echo of these cylindrical walls—but oh, no!—that is all nonsense. I do believe I am going to get nervous about my insulation. *That* will never do. I have not forgotten DeGrät’s prophecy. Now for a scramble to the lantern and a good look around to “see what I can see.” . . . To see what I can see indeed!—not very much. The swell is subsiding a little, I think—but the cutter will have a rough passage home, nevertheless. She will hardly get within sight of the Norland before noon tomorrow—and yet it can hardly be more than 190 or 200 miles.

January 2

I have passed this day in a species of ecstasy that I find it impossible to describe. My passion for solitude could scarcely have been more thoroughly gratified. I do not say *satisfied*; for I believe I should never be satiated with such delight as I have experienced today . . .

The wind lulled after daybreak, and by the afternoon the sea had gone down materially. . . . Nothing to be seen with the telescope even, but ocean and sky, with an occasional gull.

January 3

A dead calm all day. Toward evening, the sea

looked very much like glass. A few seaweeds came in sight; but, besides them absolutely *nothing* all day—not even the slightest speck of cloud . . . Occupied myself in exploring the lighthouse. . . . It is a very lofty one—as I find to my cost when I have to ascend its interminable stairs—not quite 160 feet, I should say, from the low-water mark to the top of the lantern. From the bottom *inside* the shaft, however, the distance to the summit is 180 feet at least: thus the floor is twenty feet below the surface of the sea, even at low tide. . . .

It seems to me that the hollow interior at the bottom should have been filled in with solid masonry. Undoubtedly the whole would have been thus rendered more *safe*: but what am I thinking about? A structure such as this is safe enough under any circumstances. I should feel myself secure in it during the fiercest hurricane that ever raged—and yet I have heard seamen say that, occasionally, with a wind at southwest, the sea has been known to run higher here than anywhere, with the single exception of the western opening of the Straits of Magellan.

No mere sea, though, could accomplish anything with this solid iron-riveted wall—which, at fifty feet from high-water mark, is four feet thick, if one inch. The basis on which the structure rests seems to me to be chalk. . . .

January 4

I am now prepared to resume work on my book, having spent this day in familiarizing myself with a regular routine.

My actual duties will be, I perceive, absurdly simple—the light requires little tending beyond a periodic replenishment of the oil for the six-wick burner. As to my own needs, they are easily satisfied, and the exertion of an occasional trip down the stairs is all I must anticipate.

At the base of the stairs is the entrance room; beneath that is twenty feet of empty shaft. Above the entrance room, at the next turn of the circular iron staircase, is my storeroom, which contains the casks of fresh water and the food supplies, plus linens and other daily needs. Above that—again another spiral of those interminable stairs!—is the oil room, completely filled with the tanks from which I must feed the wicks. Fortunately, I perceive that I can limit my descent to the storeroom to once a week if I choose, for it is possible for me to carry sufficient provisions in one load to supply both myself and Neptune for such a period. As to the oil supply, I need only to bring up two drums every three days and thus ensure a constant illumination. If I choose, I can place a dozen or more spare drums on the platform near the light and thus provide for several weeks to come.

So it is that in my daily existence I can limit my movements to the upper half of the lighthouse;

*I thought myself to be a man
of singular self-sufficiency,
beyond the petty needs
of a boring and banal society.
How wrong I was!*

that is to say, the three spirals opening on the topmost three levels. The lowest is my "living room"—and it is here, of course, that Neptune is confined the greater part of the day; here, too, that I plan to write at a desk near the wall slit that affords a view of the sea without. The second-highest level is my bedroom and kitchen combined. Here the weekly rations of food and water are contained in cupboards for that purpose; here, too, is the ingenious stove fed by the selfsame oil that lights the beacon above. The topmost level is the service room giving access to the light itself and to the platform surrounding it. Since the light is fixed, and its reflectors set, there is no need for me ever to ascend to the platform, save when replenishing the oil supply or making a repair or adjustment as per the written instructions—a circumstance which may well never arise during my stay here.

Already I have carried enough oil, water, and provender to the upper levels to last me for an entire month—I need stir from my two rooms only to replenish the wicks.

For the rest, I am free! Utterly free—my time is my own, and in this lofty realm I rule as king. Although Neptune is my only living subject, I can well imagine that I am sovereign o'er all I see—ocean below and stars above. I am master of the sun that rises in rubicund radiance from the sea at dawn, emperor of wind and monarch of the gale, sultan of the waves that sport or roar in rolling torrents about the base of my palace pinnacle. I command the moon in the heavens, and the very ebb and flow of the tide does homage to my reign.

But enough of fancies—DeGrät warned me to refrain from morbid or from grandiose speculation—now I shall take up in all earnestness the task that lies before me. Yet this night, as I sit before the window in the starlight, the tides sweeping against these lofty walls can only echo my exultation; I am free—and, at last, alone!

January 11

A week has passed since my last entry in this diary, and as I read it over, I can scarce comprehend that it was I who penned those words.

Something has happened—the nature of which lies unfathomed. I have worked, eaten, slept, replenished the wicks twice. My outward existence has been placid. I can ascribe the alteration in my feelings to nought but some inner alchemy; enough to say that a disturbing change has taken place.

Alone! I, who breathed the word as if it were some mystic incantation bestowing peace, have come—I realize it now—to loathe the very sound of the

syllables. And the ghastliness of meaning I know full well.

It is a dismaying, it is a dreadful thing, to be alone. Truly alone, as I am, with only Neptune to exist beside me and by his breathing presence remind me that I am not the sole inhabitant of a blind and senseless universe. The sun and stars that wheel overhead in their endless cycle seem to rush across the horizon unheeding—and, of late, unheeded, for I cannot fix my mind upon them with normal constancy. The sea that swirls or ripples below me is nought but a purposeless chaos of utter emptiness.

I thought myself to be a man of singular self-sufficiency, beyond the petty needs of a boring and banal society. How wrong I was!—for I find myself longing for the sight of another face, the sound of another voice, the touch of other hands whether they offer caresses or blows. Anything, anything for reassurance that my dreams are indeed false and that I am *not*, actually, alone.

And yet I *am*. I am, and I will be. The world is two hundred miles away; I will not know it again for an entire year. And it in turn—but no more! I cannot put down my thoughts while in the grip of this morbid mood.

January 13

Two more days—two more centuries!—have passed. Can it be less than two weeks since I was immured in this prison tower? I mount the turret of my dungeon and gaze at the horizon; I am not hemmed in by bars of steel but by columns and pillars and webs of wild and raging water. The sea has changed; gray skies have wrought a wizardry so that I stand surrounded by a tumult that threatens to become a tempest.

I turn away, for I can bear no more, and descend to my room. I seek to write—the book is bravely begun, but of late I can bring myself to do nothing constructive or creative—and in a moment I fling aside my pen and rise to pace; to endlessly pace the narrow, circular confines of my tower of torment.

Wild words, these? And yet I am not alone in my affliction—Neptune, Neptune the loyal, the calm, the placid feels it too.

Perhaps it is but the approach of the storm that agitates him so—for Nature bears closer kinship with the beast. He stays constantly at my side, whining now, and the muffled roaring of the waves without our prison causes him to tremble. There is a chill in the air that our stove cannot dissipate, but it is not cold that oppresses him. . . .

I have just mounted to the platform and gazed out at the spectacle of gathering storm. The waves are fantastically high; they sweep against the lighthouse in titanic tumult. These solid walls of stone shudder rhythmically with each onslaught. The

THE LIGHTHOUSE

churning sea is gray no longer—the water is black, black as basalt and as heavy. The sky's hue has deepened so that at the moment no horizon is visible. I am surrounded by a billowing blackness thundering against me. . . .

Back below now, as lightning flickers. The storm will break soon, and Neptune howls piteously. I stroke his quivering flanks, but the poor animal shrinks away. It seems that he fears even my presence; can it be that my own features betray an equal agitation? I do not know—I only feel that I am helpless, trapped here and awaiting the mercy of the storm. I cannot write much longer.

And yet I will set down a further statement. I must, if only to prove to myself that reason again prevails. In writing of my venture up to the platform—my viewing of the sea and sky—I omitted to mention the meaning of a single moment. There came upon me, as I gazed down at the black and boiling madness of the waters below, a wild and willful craving to become one with it. But why should I disguise the naked truth?—I felt an insane impulse to hurl myself into the sea!

It has passed now; passed, I pray, forever. I did not yield to this perverse prompting and I am back here in my quarters, writing calmly once again. Yet the fact remains—the hideous urge to destroy myself came suddenly, and with the force of one of those monstrous waves.

And what—I force myself to realize—was the meaning of my demented desire? It was that I sought escape, escape from loneliness. It was as if by mingling with the sea and the storm I would no longer be *alone*.

But I defy the elements. I defy the powers of the earth and of the heavens. Alone I am, alone I *must* be—and come what may, I shall survive! My laughter rises above all your thunder!

So—ye spirits of the storm—blow, howl, rage, hurl your watery weight against my fortress—I am greater than you in all your powers. But wait! Neptune . . . something has happened to the creature—I must attend him.

January 16

The storm is abated. I am back at my desk now, alone—truly alone. I have locked poor Neptune in the storeroom below; the unfortunate beast seems driven out of his wits by the forces of the storm. When last I wrote he was worked into a frenzy, whining and pawing and wheeling in circles. He was incapable of responding to my commands and I had no choice but to drag him down the stairs by the scruff of his neck and incarcerate him in the storeroom where he could not come to harm. I own that concern for *my* safety was involved—the possibility of being imprisoned in this lighthouse with a mad dog must be avoided.

His howls, throughout the storm, were pitiable indeed, but now he is silent. When last I ventured to gaze into the room I perceived him sleeping, and I trust that rest and calm will restore him to my full companionship as before.

Companionship!

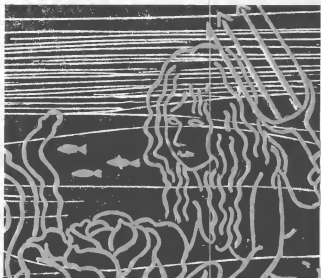
How shall I describe the horrors of the storm I faced *alone*?

In this diary entry I have prefaced a date—*January 16*—but that is merely a guess. The storm has swept away all track of time. Did it last a day, two days, three—as I now surmise—a week, or a century? I do not know.

I know only an endless raging of waters that threatened, time and again, to engulf the very pinnacle of the lighthouse. I know only an eternity of ebony, an aeon of billowing black composed of sea and sky commingled. I only know that there were times when my own voice outroared the storm—but how can I convey the cause of *that*? There was a time, perhaps a full day, perhaps much longer, when I could not bear to rise from my couch but lay with my face buried in the pillows, weeping like a child. But mine were not the pure tears of childhood innocence—call them, rather, the tears of Lucifer upon the realization of his eternal fall from grace. It seemed to me that I was truly the victim of an endless damnation; condemned forever to remain a prisoner in a world of thunderous chaos.

There is no need to write of the fancies and fantasies which assailed me through those unhalloved hours. At times I felt that the lighthouse was giving way and that I would be swept into the sea. At times I knew myself to be a victim of a colossal plot—I cursed DeGrät for sending me, knowingly, to my doom. At times (and these were the worst moments of all), I felt the full force of loneliness, crashing down upon me in waves higher than those wrought by water.

But all has passed, and the sea—and myself—are calm again. A peculiar calmness, this; as I gaze



out upon the water there are certain phenomena I was not aware of until this very moment.

Before setting down my observations, let me reassure myself that I am, indeed, *quite* calm; no trace of my former tremors or agitation yet remains. The transient madness induced by the storm has departed and my brain is free of phantasms—indeed, my perceptive faculties seem to be sharpened to an unusual acuity.

It is almost as though I find myself in possession of an additional sense, an ability to analyze and penetrate beyond former limitations superimposed by Nature.

The water on which I gaze is placid once more. The sky is only lightly leaden in hue. But wait—low on the horizon creeps a sudden flame! It is the sun, the Arctic sun in sullen splendor, emerging momentarily from the pall to incarnadine the ocean. Sun and sky, sea and air about me, turn to blood.

Can it be I who but a moment ago wrote of returned, regained sanity? I, who have just shrieked aloud, "Alone!"—and half-rising from my chair, heard the muffled booming echo reverberate through the lonely lighthouse, its sepulchral accent intoning "Alone!" in answer? It may be that I am, despite all resolution, going mad; if so, I pray the end comes soon.

January 18

There will be no end! I have conceived a notion, a theory which my heightened faculties soon will test. I shall embark upon an experiment . . .

January 26

A week has passed here in my solitary prison. Solitary?—perhaps, but not for long. The experiment is proceeding. I must set down what has occurred.

The sound of the echo set me to thinking. One sends out one's voice and it comes back. One sends out one's thoughts and—can it be that there is a response? Sound, as we know, travels in waves and patterns. The emanations of the brain, perhaps, travel similarly. And they are not confined by physical laws of time, space, or *duration*.

Can one's thoughts produce a reply that *materializes*, just as one's voice produces an echo? An echo is a product of a certain vacuum. A thought . . .

Concentration is the key. I have been concentrating. My supplies are replenished, and Neptune—visited during my venture below—seems rational enough, although he shrinks away when I approach him. I have left him below and spent the past week here. Concentration, I repeat, is the key to my experiment.

Concentration, by its very nature, is a difficult task: I addressed myself to it with no little trepidation. Strive but to remain seated quietly with a mind "empty" of all thought, and one finds in the space of

a very few minutes that the errant body is engaged in all manner of distracting movement—foot tapping, finger twisting, facial grimacing.

This I managed to overcome after a matter of many hours—my first three days were virtually exhausted in an effort to rid myself of nervous agitation and assume the inner and outer tranquillity of the Indian fakir. Then came the task of "filling" the empty consciousness—filling it completely with *one* intense and concentrated effort of will.

What echo would I bring forth from nothingness? What companionship would I seek here in my loneliness? What was the sign or symbol I desired? What symbolized to me the whole absent world of life and light?

DeGrät would laugh me to scorn if he but knew the concept that I chose. Yet I, the cynical, the jaded, the decadent, searched my soul, plumbed my longing, and found that which I most desired—a simple sign, a token of all the earth removed: a fresh and growing flower, a *rose*!

Yes, a simple rose is what I have sought—a rose, torn from its living stem, perfumed with the sweet incarnation of life itself. Seated here before the window I have dreamed, I have mused, I have then concentrated with every fiber of my being upon a *rose*.

My mind was filled with redness, not the redness of the sun upon the sea, or the redness of blood, but the rich and radiant redness of the rose. My soul was suffused with the scent of a rose: as I brought my faculties to bear exclusively upon the image, these walls fell away, the walls of my very flesh fell away, and I seemed to merge in the texture, the odor, the color, the actual *essence* of a rose.

Shall I write of this, the seventh day, when seated at the window as the sun emerged from the sea, I felt the commanding of my consciousness? Shall I write of rising, descending the stairs, opening the iron door at the base of the lighthouse and peering out at the billows that swirled at my very feet? Shall I write of stooping, of grasping, of holding?

Shall I write that I have indeed descended those iron stairs and returned here with my wave-borne trophy—that *this very day, from waters two hundred miles distant from any shore, I have reached down and plucked a fresh rose?*

January 28

It has not withered! I keep it before me constantly in a vase on this table, and it is a priceless ruby plucked from dreams. It is real—as real as the howls of poor Neptune, who senses that something odd is afoot. His frantic barking does not disturb me; nothing disturbs me, for I am master of a power greater than earth or space or time. And I shall use this power, now, to bring me the final boon. Here in my tower I have become quite a philosopher: I have

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learned my lesson well and realize that I do not desire wealth, or fame, or the trinkets of society. My need is simply this—Companionship. And now, with the power that is mine to control, I shall have it!

Soon, quite soon, I shall no longer be alone!

January 30

The storm has returned, but I pay it no heed; nor do I mark the howlings of Neptune, although the beast is now literally dashing himself against the door of the storeroom. One might fancy that his efforts are responsible for the shuddering of the very lighthouse itself, but no; it is the fury of the northern gale. I pay it no heed, as I say, but I fully realize that this storm surpasses in extent and intensity anything I could imagine as witness to its predecessor.

Yet it is unimportant; even though the light above me flickers and threatens to be extinguished by the sheer velocity of wind that seeps through these stout walls; even though the ocean sweeps against the foundations with a force that makes solid stone seem flimsy as straw; even though the sky is a single black roaring mouth that yawns low upon the horizon to engulf me.

These things I sense but dimly, as I address myself to the appointed task. I pause now only for food and a brief respite—and scribble down these words to mark the progress of resolution toward an inevitable goal.

For the past several days I have bent my faculties to my will, concentrating utterly and to the uttermost upon the summoning of a Companion.

This Companion will be—I confess it!—a woman; a woman far surpassing the limitations of common mortality. For she is, and must be fashioned, of dreams and longing, of desire and delight beyond the bounds of flesh.

She is the woman of whom I have always dreamed, the One I have sought in vain through what I once presumed, in my ignorance, was the world of reality. It seems to me now that I have always known her, that my soul has contained her presence forever. I can visualize her perfectly—I know her hair, each strand more precious than a miser's gold; the riches of her ivory and alabaster brow, the perfection of her face and form are etched forever in my consciousness. DeGrät would scoff that she is but the figment of a dream—but DeGrät did not see the rose.

The rose—I hesitate to speak of it—has gone. It was the rose which I set before me when I first composed myself to this new effort of will. I gazed at it intently until vision faded, senses stilled, and I lost myself in the attempt of conjuring up my vision of a Companion.

Hours later, the sound of rising waters from without aroused me. I gazed about, my eyes sought

the reassurance of the rose and rested only upon a *foulness*. Where the rose had risen proudly in its vase, red crest rampant upon a living stem, I now perceived only a noxious, utterly detestable strand of ichorous decay. No rose this, but only seaweed; rotted, noisome, and putrescent. I flung it away, but for long moments I could not banish a wild presentiment—was it true that I had deceived myself? Was it a weed, and only a weed I plucked from the ocean's breast? Did the force of my thought momentarily invest it with the attributes of a rose? Would anything I called up from the depths—the depths of sea or the depths of consciousness—be *truly* real?

The blessed image of the Companion came to soothe these fevered speculations, and I knew myself saved. There *was* a rose; perhaps my thought had created it and nourished it—only when my entire concentration turned to other things did it depart, or resume another shape. And with my Companion, there will be no need for focusing my faculties elsewhere. She, and she alone, will be the recipient of everything my mind, my heart, my soul possesses. If will, if sentiment, if love are needed to preserve her, these things she shall have in entirety. So there is nothing to fear. Nothing to fear . . .

Once again now I shall lay my pen aside and return to the great task—the task of “creation,” if you will—and I shall not fail. The fear (I admit it!) of loneliness is enough to drive me forward to unimaginable brinks. She, and she alone, can save me, shall save me, *must* save me! I can see her now—the golden glitter of her—and my consciousness calls to her to rise, to appear before me in radiant reality. Somewhere upon these storm-tossed seas she *exists*, I know it—and wherever she may be, my call will come to her and she will respond.

January 31

The command came at midnight. Roused from the depths of the most profound innermost communion by a thunderclap, I rose as though in the grip of somnambulistic compulsion and moved down the spiral stairs.

The lantern I bore trembled in my hand; its light wavered in the wind, and the very iron treads beneath my feet shook with the furious force of the storm. The booming of the waves as they struck the lighthouse walls seemed to place me within the center of a maelstrom of ear-shattering sound, yet over the demoniacal din I could detect the frenzied howls of poor Neptune as I passed the door behind which he was confined. The door shook with the combined force of the wind and of his still desperate efforts to free himself—but I hastened on my way, descending to the iron door at the base of the lighthouse.

To open it required the use of both hands, and I set the lantern down at one side. To open it,

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indeed summoned, the call of my consciousness *had* been answered. But the answer came not from the living, for nothing lived in this storm. I had sent my will out over the waters, but the will penetrates all dimensions, and my answer had come from *below* the waters: *She* was from below, where the drowned dead lie dreaming, and I had awakened her and clothed her with a horrid life. A life that thirsted, and must drink . . .

I think I shrieked, then, but I heard no sound. Certainly, I did not hear the howls from Neptune as the beast, burst from his prison, bounded the stairs and flung himself upon the creature.

His furry form bore her back and obscured my vision; in an instant she was falling backward, away, into the sea that spawned her. Then, and only then, did I catch a glimpse of the final moment of animation in that which my consciousness had summoned. Lightning seared the sight inexorably upon my soul—the sight of the ultimate blasphemy I had created in my pride. The rose had wilted . . .

The rose had wilted and become seaweed. And now, the golden one was gone and in its place was the bloated, swollen obscenity of a thing long-drowned and dead, risen from the slime and to that slime returning.


Only a moment, and then the waves overwhelmed it, bore it back into the blackness. Only a moment, and the door was slammed shut. Only a moment, and I raced up the iron stairs, Neptune yammering at my heels. Only a moment, and I reached the safety of this sanctuary.

Safety? There is no safety in the universe for me, no safety in a consciousness that could create such horror. And there is no safety here—the wrath of the waves increases with every moment, the anger of the sea and its creatures rises to an inevitable crescendo.

Mad or sane, it does not matter, for the end is the same in either case. I know now that the lighthouse will shatter and fall. I am already shattered, and must fall with it.

There is time only to gather these notes, strap them securely in a cylinder and attach it to Neptune's collar. It may be that he can swim, or cling to a fragment of debris. It may be that a ship, passing by this toppling beacon, may stay and search the waters for a sign—and thus find and rescue the gallant beast.

That ship shall not find me. I go with the lighthouse and go willingly, down to the dark depths. Perhaps—is it but, perverted poetry?—I shall join my Companion there forever. Perhaps . . .

The lighthouse is trembling. The beacon flickers above my head and I hear the rush of waters in their final onslaught. There is—yes—a wave, bearing down upon me. It is higher than the tower, it blots out the sky itself, everything . . . 

moreover, required the summoning of a resolution I scarcely possessed—for beyond that door was the force and fury of the wildest storm that ever shrieked across these seething seas. A sudden wave might dash me from the doorway, or conversely, enter and inundate the lighthouse itself.

But consciousness prevailed; consciousness drove me forward.

I *knew*, I thrilled to the certainty that *she* was without the iron portal—I unbolted the door with the urgency of one who rushes into the arms of his beloved.

The door swung open—blew open—roared open—and the storm burst upon me; a ravening monster of black-mouthed waves capped with white fangs. The sea and sky surged forward as if to attack, and I stood enveloped in chaos. A flash of lightning revealed the immensity of utter nightmare.

I saw it not, for the same flash illumined the form, the lineaments of *she* whom I sought.

Lightning and lantern were unneeded—her golden glory outshone all as she stood there, pale and trembling, a goddess arisen from the depths of the sea!

Hallucination, vision, apparition? My trembling fingers sought, and found, their answer. Her flesh was real—cold as the icy waters from whence she came, but palpable and permanent. I thought of the storm, of doomed ships and drowning men, of a girl cast upon the waters and struggling toward the succor of the lighthouse beacon. I thought of a thousand explanations, a thousand miracles, a thousand riddles or reasons beyond rationality. Yet only one thing mattered—my Companion was *here*, and I had but to step forward and take her in my arms.

No word was spoken, *nor could* one be heard in all that inferno. No word was needed, for she smiled. Pale lips parted as I *held out* my arms, and she moved closer. Pale lips *parted*—and I saw the pointed teeth, set in rows like *those of a shark*. Her eyes, fishlike and staring, *swam closer*. As I recoiled, her arms came up to cling, *and they were cold* as the waters beneath, cold as the storm, cold as death.

In one monstrous moment I *knew*, knew with uttermost certainty, that the power of my will had

AS A POSTSCRIPT TO THE PREVIOUS TALE, AND WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. POE, WE OFFER THIS MODERN VARIATION ON HIS . . .

MS. FOUND IN A BOTTLE

by Joseph Cromarty



A sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I had been wandering for I knew not how long, my mind filled with memories of the lovely lost Lenore, and of how cruelly her smile had mocked my aching heart. I had run out into the rain, heedless of the impending storm, wishing only to get away from the perfidious maiden.

I don't know what brought me out of my reverie, perhaps it was the intensity of the storm, but I discovered myself on a wide expanse of beach, a panorama of desolation of which no human imagination can conceive. The surf reared high up against the ghastly white crest of the promontory to my right, howling and shrieking. I stood enthralled and dizzied by the power of the mighty ocean, and I watched the line of surf approach the beach like an army on the march. Then, something caught my eye. I looked down and beheld a bottle, a small, grayish-colored bottle with a cork affixed in the top.

I thought, "This is the sort of contrivance shipwrecked sailors are said to employ to attract attention to their plight."

I stooped and plucked it from the sand as it started to roll back into the sea. Holding it aloft, I saw something moving inside it, but the color of the bottle prevented me from seeing what it was.

Grasping the bottle firmly, I pulled. The cork came free with a small popping sound that was almost lost in the fury of the gale.

Almost immediately a small, horrid-sounding voice issued from the bottle. "Let me out! Liberate me!"

I held the bottle close to my face and, peering within, espied a diminutive, perfectly formed woman with long auburn hair flowing down her naked body.

I started and nearly dropped the bottle, so unnerving was the apparition.

"For crissakes, be careful!" she screamed. "You wanna kill me?"

"I—I'm sorry," I answered. "You startled me. I never—"

"Yeah, I know. Just get me out, will ya?"

I attempted to force a finger into the bottle. "Watch it, buster!" she yelled. "My body is my property. You keep your filthy paws off it unless I tell you differently. Got me?"

"Yes. Yes, of course. But how am I to get you out? The neck of the bottle is too small to permit passage."

"If you're making fun of my figure . . ."

"No, no." I hastened to quell her rising wrath. "Ah, I have it. Those rocks over there. I shall break the bottle on them, thus freeing you." I turned toward the promontory.

"Are you crazy?" Her voice held me. "I could get hurt that way."

"Yes, yes. How stupid of me." I stopped.

"Just like a man. Come on, buster, think of something sensible."

"I have it. Butter! I'll get some butter and put it along the neck of the bottle, and then maybe you can slide out."

"I hate butter. It's fattening. Use your brain, jocko—if you have one."

I sat on the wet sand and stared out at the dark, broiling sea, watching the mighty power of the unleashed ocean.

"So that's it?" Her strident voice came from the well of the bottle. "You're just going to sit there?"

"I was thinking."

"About what? What the hell is there to think about? Just get me out."

"Why?" I queried. "Is there a reward for me? How will my effecting your release better my lot in life?"

"What the hell do you mean, your 'lot in life'?"

"Well . . ." I paused. "Are you a genie who will grant me three wishes? Will you shower me with gold? Will all the beauties of the world be mine?"

She snorted with exasperation. "I'm no Jeanie. The name's Gloria. And no, you don't get three wishes. All you get is the satisfaction of having freed me. As for me, when I get out of this glass girdle, I'll grow to full size. And as for your reward, I might let you have a quickie, if I like your looks. But that's it. No long-term commitment. I'm my own woman, see?"

I took the stopper from my pocket where I had, unconsciously, put it. Slipping it into the neck of the bottle, I gave it a small tap with the palm of my hand to secure it and stood up.

There was a muffled yelling as I brought the bottle back behind my ear, and a long, diminishing scream as I hurled the thing back from whence it came.

The waters closed suddenly and silently over the ms. in the bottle. **W**



Midtown Bodies

by John Bensink

'JUMP!' 'DON'T JUMP!' DID IT REALLY MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?

Zeckerborn, arms flapping, sailed by Gene Hodge's office window.

"One of our attorneys," Hodge said hollowly.

"One of the best," Mike Hillary said.

Hillary went to the window and looked down eighteen stories. Even from up here they could hear the awful *thunk!* of gray pinstripe creasing yellow cab. "That'll ruin your damned week," Hillary said.

"Not funny," Hodge said. Still, he knew glib Hillary could find sick humor in just about anything; he'd flip the bird to the mushroom cloud just a breath before the fire-shock fried his face.

They were work friends, two opposites who'd somehow attracted; each of them was the only confidant the other had found at the corporation. Hodge, research and development chief and a gifted scientist in his own right, shuttled between the Manhattan headquarters and the company's r & d center upstate. Hillary was high up in public relations, which, he said, explained all his quirks and character defects, including any he might develop in the future.

Hillary was here to get more dope for updates on this business with the Norsen girl. The media were insatiable on this ore—as, of course, they had every right to be: it was, after all, the story of the century.

"I told you all I know," Hodge said.

"You know nothing. 'Mind over matter.' 'Untapped centers of the brain releasing extraordinary faculties under stress.' I couldn't do a better job of saying nothing myself, and I'm a professional."

"There!" Hodge said, pointing east.

Hillary whirled around, his eyes tracking the line Hodge's finger indicated. "Maybe. I *think* I saw someone up by the Pan Am Building."

"That's not where I was pointing," Hodge

said, smiling. "You must have seen somebody else. Maybe it *can* work."

A Chinese zipped straight down in front of the window.

"And maybe it *can't*," Hillary said.

"Fred Fong," Hodge said dismally.

"Assimilation problems?"

"Fong? He's third-generation. And a damned good accountant."

"Was," Hillary said, looking out the window.

Hodge rushed to the window. Fred Fong almost pulled out of it. But didn't. "Maybe we didn't see anybody doing it after all," Hodge said, mournfully.

"These things happen, pal. People have a right to try what they want."

"But this is so incredibly different, Mike."

Hillary's anger was calculated. "Now what are you going to start? 'If man had been meant to fly, God wouldn't have let him invent airplanes'? If someone out there"—he pointed to a place about two hundred feet above the Avenue of the Americas—"wants to just perch on his windowsill and—"

Hillary stopped, made mute by the smiling Puerto Rican delivery boy going by with a carton of iced tea and sodas in his outstretched hands. A little bit like an ethnic Superman, maybe, only not so sleek and purposeful; and of course he didn't have a costume. Just the same: the boy was flying. "Maybe we should order something up," Hillary said, recovering.

"It *can* work," Hodge said, unbelieving.

Hillary opened the window. Street sounds, amplified by the echo effect of opposing skyscrapers, came into Hodge's office redoubled. Hillary hung a leg over the windowsill. "*Arivederci*." He chuckled.



"Or, as the Germans say, I'll be the same."

"I don't think you will," Hodge said, grabbing him firmly.

"Hey!" Hillary said, his anger suddenly raw, "I can do what I damned well dare. Let's not forget you're still the scientific wimp, and I'm still the badass mother from p.r. You feed goldfish on weekends. I play soccer."

Hodge let go his grip on Hillary. "I had no idea it would work," he said. "I can't explain the Norsen girl."

Hillary's face went dead-white and he slid out of the window, down the wall, and onto the floor. "These windows aren't supposed to open," he said defensively.

They weren't, but they did here at company headquarters, which was so new it still smelled of spackling, caulking, and glazing compounds. A hot new architect had decided to give up the closed-window cliché of skyscraper buildings; statistics had shown him that while suicides were indeed on the rise, jumping as a method was growing less popular every year.

Nevertheless: The day before, a temporary typist had jumped out of a window on Hodge's floor. Gene Hodge had tried to talk Linda Norsen of the Bronx out of taking the giant step just because she was spectacularly unattractive, had no friends, and would very likely be trapped in a dull, ill-paying job for the rest of her life. She'd said she was deliciously unhappy. What was the point of going on, she'd demanded of Hodge, who, like most people at such moments, could only come up with the usual: the value of family, friends, living in the good old U.S.A., satisfaction from any job, as long as it was well done, blah, blah, blah (which is what

Linda Norsen had said to all that). Besides, the weather had been getting her down.

Indeed. There had been no blackouts that summer, but New York in August was practically a round-the-clock brownout: The suffering city pulled so mightily on its power sources that elevators were sluggish, streetlights weak, subways slower than ever; air conditioning wheezed almost-warm air on you like someone's old breath; public electric clocks lost many minutes, making dog days seem even more unendurably long than they should have been. People, understandably, were in lousy moods, maybe willing, Hodge had thought, to try something new.

Hodge had given up the typical talk-down-the-jumper speech at that point and had gotten through to the Norsen girl by telling her it was worth sticking around because mankind was about to enter a new age; his company, a giant with a better identity factor than many countries, was in the front of the development; and bumblebees were our inspiration. Then he'd explained himself.

Five minutes later, Linda Norsen had dropped out the window and made some embarrassingly ungainly maneuvers with her awkward body for about 150 feet. Then, as though yanking an invisible ripcord and losing a parachute, she'd slowed, almost stopping, and then had soared six blocks north over the avenue, coming down in front of the Hilton. Her landing, like everything about her, had been less than beautiful, but she'd been unhurt. It was later estimated that there had been at least four thousand eyewitnesses.

Hellishly pretty Cynthia Odet, a programmer, zoomed by just as Hillary got back to his feet. Both Hillary and Hodge had something for her and had talked once about proposing to her, but they were both married, and so was Cynthia; things would have been too complicated. Still: something about her.

"She looks great no matter what she does," Hillary said.

And nothing would mar her allure. Cynthia was doing it. Secretaries from Rockefeller Center were coming out of their buildings and joining her. They were all headed for Central Park.

"It works!" Hillary said. "What was that you said about the bees?"

Agape a moment, Hodge began speaking as though from a distance. "Bumblebees. They can't fly. Aerodynamically, they don't work. It's impossible. Yet they fly. They never studied aerodynamics. Nobody ever told them they couldn't fly."

Fenstermacher, a corpulent vice-president in charge of sales, swooped down, then flew in the direction of the park.

"Fat-ass Fenstermacher!" Hillary exploded. "Look at that bastard go!"

Hodge had tried something
on the Norsen girl
he'd always wanted
to try on someone,
but never dared...
Why not try it on her?
She didn't seem
to have a whole lot
to live for anyway.

Go, Fenstermacher did: he was as heavier-than-air as anyone, but there was a definite buoyancy about him. People were swarming onto the avenue from the cross streets.

"He was always such a down-to-earth guy," Hodge said, astonished.

Hillary looked at Hodge to make sure he wasn't joking. Hodge wasn't. "If Fenst can, anybody can," Hillary said. He went to the window, stepped up, looked out on the city and the people going by, then looked back to Hodge. "Like I said before—"

"No guarantees, buddy. Look what happened to Zeckerborn. And Fong. And who knows who else at this point."

"That had to happen. And you had to know it would. Look, you're not using beagles now."

"We never use beagles," Hodge said. "Rats. Rhesus. Convicts when we can. Never beagles."

"Anyway," Hillary said, "this is what you call a major breakthrough, something *really* brand-new, and there have to be risks involved. It's up to each person to decide for himself."

"I don't know how it *works*," Hodge said.

"Doesn't matter. Look, when I was fourteen I made my mother show me documentation proving she was really my mother. I'm the original skeptical guy. I'm convinced of this now." Hillary winked, cocksure. "If you know you can . . . you *can*."

He dropped away. Straight down.

Hodge smacked his stomach into the window edge to get a look. He got there just in time to see Hillary slow down fifty feet off the sidewalk, then soar upward, and west, around their tower. In a few seconds, he was hovering in front of the window.

"Glad I took the plunge," Hillary said. "Hey—we finally came up with something new before California did."

"Now what?" Hodge asked.

"I'm going to find Cynthia and look up her dress." Hillary laughed, ecstatic and reborn. Then he was gone.

Cruel, skeptical, sardonic, doubting Michael Hillary had been the key. There had been reports during the night and today of a few people trying it

and doing it, but they were as yet unconfirmed, and not until someone like Hillary was convinced, was a believer, would Hodge know it was possible. He had to make sure those he'd seen doing it in the last few minutes weren't freaks of some sort. If Hillary could believe and do it, then anyone could believe and do it.

Hodge had tried something on the Norsen girl he'd always wanted to try on *someone*, but never dared. He'd never had the opportunity, or the nerve, to bring up his ideas about bumblebees. Linda Norsen was going out the window one way or the other, so why not try it on her—she didn't seem to have a whole lot to live for anyway. If anyone were vulnerable, susceptible to believing the outlandish, it was the Norsen girl. And she had bought it; poor thing: She needed to believe in *something*. He hoped the attention the press had given her last night and today was enough to sustain her for a long time to come; now that it seemed everybody could do it, she wouldn't be such big news anymore.

Bodies flitted between buildings as Gene Hodge put on his suit jacket. It was almost quitting time. He stepped onto the windowsill, then stepped out above the Avenue of the Americas.

It was a little spongy, perhaps like that feeling children have in dreams when they're moving through clouds and the substance of the clouds tugs at their feet like loose, raw wool—a certain resistance, but not much. Making himself prone, Hodge discovered the air now felt like a too-soft couch—as though you could settle in deep, become enveloped, maybe even fall asleep quickly.

But the traffic-stream of bodies wouldn't let him fall asleep, of course. More than mere physical presences of his fellow travelers, there was the exaltation of each to consider, which magnified his own. He was responsible, the catalyst. He'd caused this joy. He had indeed ushered in a new age.

Smiling a face-hurting grin, Hodge headed north. All he had to do was *look* in the direction he wanted to travel, then *want* to go that way, and he was propelled. It did work. Easily.

He was jostled in the second block by some Wall Street type hellbent, apparently, for Westchester, but he held his bearing, exultant. *It does work, dammit! I knew it would!* He didn't, really, not until Hillary had done it, but *now* he knew. Now he was doing it himself. Let his colleagues figure out the *why* of it, Hodge thought.

He banked east onto Fifty-second Street. He got held up briefly at Fifth Avenue, then continued to Madison Avenue, which was a mess. A lot of assholes were going the wrong way. He elbowed his way onto Madison, where it was all stop-and-go and head-to-toe. Somebody screamed at him for no reason whatsoever. It was going to be hell getting home tonight. **12**

The Chili Connection

by Hal Hill

VASCO BLANCO HAD A MIGHTY TOUGH PALATE—BUT WAS HE A MATCH FOR HOT THROAT, THE CHILI-EATING CHAMP OF THE GALAXY?

Los Fuegos Pequeños was a sand-spackled village of adobe mud and oil paint that alternately parched and froze with the seasons of Mexico's Sonora Desert. The village's livelihood was provided by the agave cactus ranch of Diablito Orozco, and its fame was supplied by their resident national champion, Vasco Blanco. On the annual day of contest, Vasco, the surefire legend and near-saint of Los Fuegos Pequeños, stood in the freshly decorated plaza preparing to deliver his challenge. For the next four hours all comers from the states of Mexico and the countries of the world would be given a chance to take the fiery crown from "*El Rey de los Chilis*."

Vasco raised his arms, and the noisy crush of fiesta-charged villagers grew quiet as velvet. "I can eat more chilis than any man, anywhere; and I challenge any and all to come to Los Fuegos Pequeños and prove otherwise!"

The delivery was distinct, matter-of-fact. The boast carried to the arid scruff of mesquite and cactus that surrounded the village. A wary armadillo heard the dare and quickly rolled itself into a shiny ball of articulated gray vinyl. Even the beaded gila monster scrunched farther back in the shady crack of his rocky retreat, unwilling to trade stings and venom with the "King of the Hot Peppers."

Vasco lowered his arms, resting smooth hands on a long plank of dried suharo cactus supported by

two empty flour barrels. Clay bowls decorated with the lush flowers and vines of gentler climates crowded the makeshift table. Inside the bowls lay a blistering array of nature's hottest vegetables; *jalapenos*, *serranos*, red chilis, and tabascos were heaped like glistening pods of molten lava, and even the stubborn desert flies shied away, afraid of scorching their tiny fly feet.

Whooping applause rocked the plaza as the champion took his seat. The rich penny whistle of an ocarina started up, soon accompanied by guitar and concertina, and the fifty-two residents of Los Fuegos Pequeños began to vacate the curving rows of cane chairs that had been arranged in rough half-circles opposite the contest table. Behind them, in an area left open for dining and dancing, lids covering steaming bowls of rice, beans, *salsa*, pickled cactus, and fried *tortillas* were lifted.

Amaya the baker proudly lofted a cake decorated with candy chilis, then laid it at the champion's table. Field hands plopped down tributes of vegetables, tobacco, and rice; and the owner of the general store presented Vasco with a box wrapped with newspaper, tied with a bow, and containing three pairs of white cotton socks. Diablito Orozco, the hereditary owner of the agave ranch, set an earthen jug of *pulche* within arm's reach of Vasco, then tipped the broad flat brim of his Stetson.

Pulche is a native agave alcohol first concocted



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by the Aztecs. The legendary kick of the agave—or in Mexico, *maquey*—drink was and still is infamous. It's a special intoxication that smacks of gods and sacrifices; said to turn boys into men . . . and men into animals.

Diablito stood back and watched as the warm mingle of community paid its yearly respects. It had been ten years since Vasco had arrived, but to Diablito he appeared not to have aged. The straight jaw and prominent cheeks still reminded him of pictures he'd seen of Sitting Bull, and the startling white skin still reflected the creamy softness of the yucca flower. Diablito didn't know Vasco's age; Vasco always told him, "Somewhere in my early forties." When asked where he came from, Vasco would say, "Somewhere to the south, in the hills."

He'd shown up all at once, his two donkeys swaying under the weight of his worldly possessions. He also brought a skill, glassblowing, and a wondrous ability to consume the green, fleshy fire of the pepper plant. Four times a year he meticulously packed the crystal ships, animals, and vases that he had blown and stretched from molten glass onto his donkeys and made the trek forty miles west to the coastal markets. There he would sell his wares to tourists who prayed that the fragile extremities of their thumb-sized fawns, elves, and tigers would still be attached when they got home to Laredo.

Diablito knew that he was perhaps the closest thing to a friend Vasco had, but he sometimes felt that Vasco's feeling for him was the same kind that some people have for an interesting bend in a river or the intriguing patterns that show in the face of polished agate. Vasco was friendly enough when you ran into him, amenable when need be, but he had the heart of a recluse. Living on the outskirts of the compact village, he was as much a creature of the solitary desert as he was a resident of Los Fuegos Pequeños.

After the well-wishers had drifted to the food tables and dancing, Diablito made his way to the contest table, pulled a chair next to the champion, and sat down.

"*Campeón*, congratulations on your tenth year as *El Rey de los Chilis*," he said, two gold caps overshadowing his smile.

"The four hours have just started," Vasco said. "Perhaps this year some challenger will find the road to Los Fuegos Pequeños, take my crown, and carry my small fame back to the south."

Diablito leaned back in his chair, and the wicker-weave of the seat crinkled. He rubbed his chin and moved his jaw back and forth a few times to help him find the right words, then said, "Yes, and perhaps this year the Lizard King of the universe will vacation in Guadalajara, but I doubt it." He righted his chair, satisfied with the heft of his overstatement.

"It is possible though," Vasco persisted.

Diablito took a long dark swallow of *pulche*. "Perhaps it was a bad example, but you know what I mean," he said. "For ten years you've been champion, and for the last five no one has challenged you. Come on, admit it, you're a displaced Aztec god who's kind of drifted into Los Fuegos Pequeños on the slow road through eternity. Aren't you?" Diablito's lanky frame creased with laughter. It was his favorite joke on the man he jokingly referred to as *El Indio de Misterio*, "The Indian of Mystery."

Vasco leaned toward Diablito until his face was only a breath away from Diablito's. "Only if you will admit that you are really Pancho Villa, the small-change artist," he said, green eyes poking serious from his granite features.

Orozco was a benevolent *haciendado*. Good wages went to his field hands, and the protection of his wealth went to the settlement that had grown up next to the agave ranch built and planted by his grandfather. Diablito himself had named the town once it had grown to proper size: *Los Fuegos Pequeños*, "the little fires," in honor of one of his two passions, the scorching peppers that he imported from the prize fields of Ensenada. The consumption of chilis has been an eating habit of the people of middle America since the time of the Aztecs, and it was they who introduced hot peppers to the Spaniards. Orozco's other passion, *pulche*, was also a gift of the ancient empire.

Two hours passed and the coolness of twilight livened the celebration. Crêpe-paper streamers tied and ribboned around fences and posts facing the plaza fluttered in a welcome breeze, rimming the square with bright ripples of orange, yellow, and blue. Vasco had wandered alone to the edge of the village, and stood gazing over a stand of blue-green barrel cactus into the pale crimson sunset. He scanned the sky, looking for the first star; Star Light, Star Bright, he thought, but the first twinkle that he saw that night appeared to be a shooting star that blazed an ever-brightening curve through the northern sky, then popped like a flashbulb into the Earth's atmosphere. The graying evening retreated for one brilliant instant and the shadowy desert was illuminated. The roistering celebrants of Los Fuegos Pequeños halted in mid-dance, mid-taco, and squinted into the northern sky for answers.

Quick as a pickpocket, twilight returned, but it was a moment before surprise loosened its grip on the villagers' tongues. Amaya the baker spoke first. "What the hell was that?" he asked the sky, the sand, the desert toad.

Led by Diablito, the crowd squeezed between the adobe walls of the bakery and the general store and walked to the end of the village where Vasco

**'My name to you means
Hot Throat. I am a
black-hole chaser and a
hot-nova drinker, and I
can eat more chilis than
any being in the galaxy!'**

Blanco was still frozen, sight fixed on the northern sky. A small gray funnel was descending unmistakably in the direction of Los Fuegos Pequeños. Inside it a dervish dance of colors careened and collided like rainbows in a whirlwind.

"Maybe it's a comet," came a voice from the crowd.

Diablito grimaced. "Maybe it's the Virgin of Guadalupe riding a lightning bolt," he half spat. Diablito reckoned this to be serious business and took a dark brown mouthful of *pulche*.

The electric twister spiraled lower and lower, until the slack-jawed residents of the "little fires" watched it disappear behind a jutting mound of chaparral roughly a quarter-mile away.

"What do you think it is, Vasco?" Diablito asked.

"I don't know, funny weather, electricity in the air—who knows?"

"I have an aunt in Cuernavaca who saw a spaceship," Amaya offered.

"Nonsense. This is no spaceship, it is not shaped like a cigar or a plate," Diablito said.

"Something's moving this way," Vasco said excitedly, "coming from the direction where the cloud touched down."

A figure, just visible in the dimming light, crested the mound and moved smoothly across the gray-brown desert floor toward the village.

Diablito gestured to one of his field hands. "Rolfoe, run to the ranch house and bring back my turquoise-handled revolvers, my letter of commendation from *el presidente* Lazaro Cardenas, and a fresh glass of *pulche*."

The women crossed themselves and the men drew heavily on *pulche* for support. Some of the villagers passed gas in their excitement; others began to edge toward the security of their homes, but Diablito rallied them.

"Have we no pride? Are we frightened by flashing clouds? Lights?" The villagers quieted, all sharing a moment of reflection, of introspection; then agreement gripped them. Hell, yes, they were awed by miraculous lights and flashing clouds, they were good Catholics.

Diablito's tone became indignant. "Today is a day of contest; of celebration and welcome, so let us welcome this one as we would any other." One last glower, then Diablito tucked the loose ends of his cowboy shirt in and turned to watch the approach-

ing stranger.

The mystery guest reached the far edge of the cactus field and halted.

At that distance Vasco couldn't make out features, but the approaching he, or she, appeared to be neither mestizo nor Indian. The head was elongated and the creature had the color of a freshly boiled lobster. Slowly the seven-foot figure raised an arm, displaying an open palm the size of a small catcher's mitt, the universal sign of peace. A series of high whistles issued from the stranger, then ceased, to be followed by a brittle click, then a low metallic whirring, then a voice.

"Greetings." The voice was tinny and scratchy, like bad radio. "If my coordinates are correct, this is Earth, the country of Mexico, the village of Los Fuegos Pequeños. Am I correct?"

"If his *coordinates* are correct?" Amaya whispered excitedly.

"Quiet, Amaya," Diablito said. "Go and see what's keeping my revolvers. I don't think this one will be interested in my presidential letter." Turning, Diablito shouted across the growth of cactus, "This is Los Fuegos Pequeños, but may I ask who you are and what brings you to our town?"

Again the high whistles and whirring; then, "My name to you means Hot Throat. My exact origin would mean nothing to you, but it is in the direction of the constellation you call the Big Bear. As to why I'm here, that is simple enough." Once more he moved toward them, weaving like hot butter through the barbed maze of waist-high cactus. "I am here to contest with Vasco Blanco, a humanoid who—or so your country's radio waves say—is now almost ten times the champion of the planet Earth. I am a black-hole chaser and a hot-nova drinker, and I, Hot Throat, can eat more chilis than any being in the galaxy!"

Finishing the boast, he glided to a halt in front of the assemblage, then dismounted from what appeared to be a metal disc roughly a foot across, the conveyance that had transported him so smoothly. His skin was thick and scabrous, and a collage of alien runes and glyphs were etched into it like tattoos cut into burnished leather. His green eyes were set deep as postholes and the irises were cut in half by the long tapered pupils—cat's eyes. Small rows of cartilaginous plates rimmed his marble-sized mouth opening, and Vasco watched as the plates rolled back to frame what might have been the most sarcastic grin that he had ever seen.

"You're here for the contest?" Diablito asked, his voice rising in disbelief.

"Affirmative," answered Hot Throat, "and where is Vasco Blanco, your living legend, your tender-throated eater of sweet peppers?" Hot Throat was rolling. The villagers tensed, their fear losing ground to pride. They knew little about the vagaries

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of space-time or galaxies, but they knew an insult when they heard one.

Shrill whistles, like a whale song, filled the air as Hot Throat laughed. The translator seemed to be broadcasting from inside the alien's chest, implanted behind the horny breastplates. Unable to render an equivalent "laugh," the device turned Hot Throat's jeering whale song into a flat, unimpressed, "Ha, Ha, Ha." Gleefully he clapped his hands, but they met with a thud, the sound muffled by the armadillo-like skin.

"Why, must I insult you, then?" Hot Throat asked. "What does an insult amount to in this cat box of a village? Is it your family pet I need slur, the names of your ancestors, your mother, your sister . . ."

Vasco stepped forward. "Hold your insults, Hot Throat," he said. "I accept your challenge and am honored to contest with *el campeón* of the galaxy."

A current of pride buzzed the villagers and the first tinglings of bravado tickled their hearts. "Yeah, we don't care where he's from," someone from the crowd shouted timorously. "Vasco's gonna burn him out!"

Spunk, spunk, I love a show of spunk," Hot Throat gushed. The transport disc rose a few inches off the ground and Hot Throat started to mount. "Lead me then, lead me to the contest arena; then stand back and bring on the peppers. I've chewed heat from Aldoor to Ptah and am well ready to put out the 'little fires' of the planet Earth."

"*Un momento*, Hot Throat," Diablito said, stepping in front of the hovering disc. Rolfeo the field hand had returned with his revolvers, presidential commendation, and a fresh glass of *pulche*, but it was the *pulche* that Diablito now pointed at the alien. "It is our custom for the guests to enjoy the fruit of our fields, the drink *pulche*," he said.

The tiny rows of overlapping scales that described Hot Throat's smile slackened, then began to close as if drawn by purse strings. "I have never had occasion to imbibe while contesting," he said.

"You mean . . ."

"I do not drink while eating peppers," Hot Throat reiterated.

Diablito started, almost spilling the *pulche*, then turned to the villagers, his eyes widened in amazement. "He doesn't drink *pulche* while eating chilis," he repeated, a dribble of incredulous laughter spotting his chin.

"Doesn't drink while eating chilis, doesn't drink while eating chilis," Amaya the baker gurgled through the thick wax of his thin moustache. A rib-sticking giggle rippled the villagers, soon followed by a big horse laugh.

"What must we do?" asked a *pulche*-inspired

kitchen hand standing near the front of the throng, "slur your mother, your four-legged ancestors, or insult that flattened cow-pattie of a horse that you rode in on."

The villagers went spastic with laughter, except for Diablito, who was half smiling and half watching the alien to see if the ridicule was having any effect; and Vasco, who was still gazing thoughtfully, placidly, over the cactus field in the direction where Hot Throat landed.

Like the villagers, Hot Throat knew an insult when he heard one, but he showed no sign of being miffed. They couldn't impugn his mother's honor, he was a clone. He was a bit irked that the natives had made fun of his new transport device. It was the latest, a retriever model, and Hot Throat was especially proud of his new gadget, but even this didn't really ruffle him. It was probably disdain that prompted him, a provincial disdain as big as the Milky Way and born of light-years of arrogance.

He walked toward Diablito, the sharp soles of his feet leaving tracks like heavy chicken scratches in the sandy soil. Movement was starchy, and the leather-hinged joints of arms and legs flexed like hard rubber. The glass of *pulche* disappeared in Hot Throat's mittlike grasp, and something like a sneer radiated from his puckered mouth. "Pigs," came the tinny, Nelson Eddy voice. Putting the glass to the thin seam of his "lips," he tilted his head back until it rested on a short carapace that jutted from his shoulders. Draining the contents in one draught, he handed the glass back to Diablito. A trickle of *pulche*



meandered down his square chin, switching back and forth in the grooved swirls and geodesics that were etched into his face.

"There!" Hot Throat said triumphantly. "I've drunk your swill, and now can we get on with . . ." The alien recoiled and a stiff shudder ricocheted up his back. A low gurgle of whistles issued from his mouth; then a perfunctory three-whistle phrase that the translator delivered as, "Excuse me."

"There now, plenty of time for drinking," Diablito said, delighting the villagers by delivering a playful slap on the back of the temporarily subdued Hot Throat. "And now let us make our way to the arena for the world-shaking contest between the galactic champion, Hot Throat, from up there," Diablito said, jerking his thumb in the direction of the Big Bear, "and Vasco Blanco, champion of Earth, from the village of Los Fuegos Pequeños."

Vasco had remained quiet, reserved; enthralled by the fantasy that had made its way into the sun-blistered reality of Los Fuegos Pequeños. His initial fear had given way to awe, and that to a rapturous bemusement. The manufacture of miniature dreams and crystal fancies was his vocation, and he watched this chimera take shape just as he watched and wondered at the molten glass that he stretched and coiled into the prismatic reflections of another world.

The village reassembled inside the plaza, and the citizens seated themselves opposite the contest table. Vasco and Hot Throat took chairs at the bleached and porous cactus plank and Diablito, the official judge, stood between them.

"And now a toast to open the contest," Diablito announced, setting a full glass of *pulche* in front of the alien.

Abruptly Vasco turned to face Hot Throat. "To the dream that we shall make today," he said, tossing down the *pulche* remaining in his glass.

"To the dream," Diablito echoed, raising his glass; then halting, waiting for Hot Throat to raise his.

"To the dream that you have lived for too many years; to the dream that I, Hot Throat, shall end today," he said, rallying. Again he downed the powerful liquor in one shot. "What's this called again?" he asked Diablito, his broad shoulders twitching ever so slightly.

"*Pulche*, the drink of our ancestors and the nectar of their gods," Diablito replied. "And now señor Hot Throat from the sky, and Vasco Blanco from Los Fuegos Pequeños, let the eating commence."

The torches and oil lamps were lit and the plaza was bathed in soft orange light. As home team, Vasco would start the contest by eating five peppers of his choice, then rest while Hot Throat ate five of the same. Hot Throat could then call the gastronom-

ic bet by choosing and ingesting five more, this time of his preference; or he might choose to "raise" by eating ten or even twenty peppers, there being no limit on raises.

Hot Throat allowed that the rules were okay; "... about the same wherever you go," he said. Those closest to him couldn't help but notice the slight slurring that punctuated his whistling. The translator still carried the evenly modulated tininess, but Hot Throat's own voice had lost all chirp and seemed to slither from phrase to phrase.

Vasco selected the *aficionado's* choice, the scalding cream of the hot pepper crop, the *jalapeno*, as his appetizer. His meticulous style was known throughout Mexico. As the fiery chilis neared his mouth, the lips were pulled back cleanly, exposing two half-rows of white teeth. Lips are tender, fleshy and easily set throbbing by the viscous fire that shines oily from the *jalapeno's* dark green skin. His chew was deliberate, and the motions of arm and hand were reflexive, the ingrained basics of a champion's mental set. A few bothersome strands of straight black hair dangled into his eyes and he deftly used his shirt cuff to push them back, eschewing the supple but pepper-stained fingers that could unwittingly deal agony and tears to his eyes. In less than a minute the peppers were gone. Now it was Hot Throat's turn.

The alien scooped up five peppers and tossed them like peanuts into his widely dilated mouth opening. The mouth shrank to dime size and a heavy grinding sound, like pumice stone on enamel, came from inside. Hot Throat's mouth parts milled away and in seconds the peppers were ground to paste and swallowed. He turned to Vasco. "So, you have a certain native flair," he said, "but can you eat peppers?"

So saying, he selected fifty chilis: twenty more plump *jalapenos*; twenty of the pale green, thin-skinned scorchers that made the state of Tabasco famous; and ten tapered *serrano* chilis from the mountains to the southeast. Five at a time he devoured them, like jellybeans and popcorn. In three minutes all fifty chilis were in Hot Throat's asbestos gullet—and the stomachs of the gaping residents of Los Fuegos Pequeños were in their throats.

Vasco would have ten minutes to match Hot Throat, but could he? He'd polished off two hundred chilis to take the championship from the coastal state of Nyarit, but that was over a five-hour period. And what if Hot Throat raised another fifty peppers, or even a hundred?

Vasco appeared unruffled, self-assured, but inside he was saying, "Fifty peppers, Jesus Christ, fifty peppers." He nodded to the alien and puckered his lower lip as if readying to concede some tedious and insignificant point. "It appears you have a little rabbit in you, *Don* Hot Throat; you are off to a fast

The Chili Connection

start. But can you run?" Vasco asked, playing the part of someone he once saw in a movie.

Hot Throat giggled the high warbling giggle of a drunken porpoise, then fell over backward in his chair. "Look out! The world is rolling forward!" he exclaimed as the ground slammed into the wicker chair back. Still laughing, Hot Throat swayed jerkily to his feet, righted the chair, and reseated himself. Abruptly he ceased laughing and took stock of the silent crowd. "Don't you people even understand relativity humor when you hear it?" he thundered.

A jagged hush fell on the crowd. Hot Throat was on the verge of getting ugly. "Excuse me, Hot Throat," Diablito said hurriedly, "but I have never seen such an exhibition of chili eating! A toast, a toast to you, Oh space-walking eater of lightning!"

The cloud of belligerence left the alien's face. Hot Throat uncured a smile and hoisted his glass. The villagers cheered him on. "To Hot Throat, a worthy eater of peppers," they said. Hot Throat drank recklessly, the effect of the already consumed *pulche* prodding him. Instead of setting his empty glass on the table, he handed it over his shoulder to Diablito.

"Fill it up, bartender," he said, then waved his long arms at the throng of villagers who had left their chairs and were standing around the contest table. "Quiet, quiet," he said. "And now I will propose a toast." Diablito filled the glass and handed it back to Hot Throat. The alien rose from his chair, knocking it over in the process, and pointed his glass at the star-crowded desert night. A low moan of a whistle started up, wavered, then stuttered to a halt. Whatever it was, it choked him up. "To Kara Prale from Kwale," he finally managed. "The only female that I ever really loved."

"To Kara Prale? From Kwale?" Vasco asked.

"Exactly," Hot Throat assured him.

"To Kara Prale from Kwale," the villagers repeated softly, subdued by the alien's poignantly familiar toast. Everyone drained their glasses.

Diablito picked up Hot Throat's chair, slid it under him, and served him a fresh glass of *pulche*. Hot Throat turned to Vasco. "But eat up, Oh soft-skinned drinker of volcano's milk. You have less than ten minutes to eat fifty peppers, and I must soon be on my way." He let the base of his skull rest on his carapace and the slight gloss of half-tears reflected torchlight from his cat eyes. "Back to Kwale and Kara Prale," he whistled low. Hot Throat took a soothing blast of *pulche*, and Vasco Blanco began his assault on the forbidding mountain of chilis.

The Earthly King of the Chilis began slowly, creating a rhythm as fluid and sure as breathing. Five chews per pepper was his habit, but after the fifteenth chili Vasco quickened the pace to four chews each. At the end of five

minutes he had engorged twenty peppers, but he was still five behind. The partisan crush of villagers cheered their champion like New York cheered Ruth, like Troy cheered Hector. Their alcohol in one hand and their stuffed *tortillas* in the other, they watched the contest, emotion working their jaws and filling their eyes between bites, gulps, and exclamations.

"A year's supply of *tortillas* and four boxes of pastries for finishing all fifty!" exclaimed Amaya, wiping his sweaty pink face with a crusty bandanna.

"You can do it/ you can do it/ you're the *campeón*," came the sing-song cheer of three pigtailed school girls near the rear of the crowd.

While Vasco worked on the peppers, Diablito continued to work on Hot Throat. Hot Throat was asking if the village had any "Quag" music. "No, I don't believe I've ever heard the Orion Five, but I'm sure that the, the Quag music they play is indeed the best in the galaxy," Diablito said. "Actually, the only electrical machine in the village is Amaya's new Victrola, but I'm sure we will have more after we get electricity."

The villagers were oblivious to the dialogue, too busy encouraging the pumping jaws of Vasco Blanco.

"I said the Orion Five are the best in the universe; not just the galaxy. They sing like the gods of time and space," Hot Throat insisted sloppily.

Diablito found a solemn face. "A toast to the Orion Five, the premier Quag musicians in the universe," he said, emotion cracking his voice. Loyally Hot Throat drained his glass and loyally Diablito filled it. The once-rigid lines of the alien's leathery frame began to sag in his chair and his right arm dangled from his side. Turning his head, he stared dully at Vasco.

El Rey de los Chilis was in a feeding frenzy. Time was running out and he still had twelve peppers to go. "Eat, Eat, Eat," the ecstatic villagers sang. The silver-plated pocket watch that lay on the table between the competitors ticked on, its tiny sound lost in the rising chant. With five seconds and three peppers to go, Vasco made a one-handed sweep and crammed the chilis, stems and all, into his mouth. "Eat, Eat, Eat," prayed the crowd, and with one second to spare Vasco opened an empty mouth to the roaring villagers, the feckless alien, and the sly Diablito.

"Congratulations, *El Azteca*," Diablito said, raising his glass. Vesuvius lay in his stomach and the chrome-fever demons of *pulche* rattled his brain, but the champion swayed to a stand and accepted the salute.

Hot Throat hadn't stirred. He still cradled a full glass of *pulche* in his left hand and his right arm still hung like a weathered strip of jerky at his side.

"What is your bet, *El Campeón*?" Diablito asked. "How many chilis will this Hot Throat have

to swallow to take your crown with him to the stars?"

Vasco, still standing, looked down at the alien. Hot Throat tried to speak and a low, gurgling foghorn of a whistle slipped from the barely open mouth; only this time the translator couldn't manage to make words of it. Instead of the scratchy pseudo-voice, a cacaphony of vowels and consonants spilled from the device.

"I would challenge the pepper king of the galaxy to eat one single chili," said Vasco. "If he can eat one chili, then he can take my crown and the glory of Los Fuegos Pequeños with him to the sky." So saying, Vasco selected a *tabasco*, plopped it onto his outstretched tongue, chewed, and swallowed.

The closest thing to a sound in the plaza was the imperceptible flicker of the torchlight. The villagers stood on tiptoes around the table, their eyes fixed on the alien. Hot Throat's right hand started up for the table top. For a moment it groped along the rough edge of the cactus plank, then slipped like the head of a pendulum, carrying the stupefied alien to a gritty thud on the desert floor.

A roar started from the crowd, then rumbled back to silence. The hibernating retriever disc was up, making for a spot next to its fallen master. It began to spin, and as the revolutions increased, the disc grew, edge riffling and spreading in a perfect circle like some enchanted pizza crust. Soon it was no thicker than foil and had reached six feet in diameter. Slipping easily beneath the plastered Hot Throat, the disc rose and moved gently through the assembly with its insensate cargo. Once again locked in amaze, the villagers watched the silver platter and the erstwhile champion of the galaxy glide between the adobe walls of the bakery and the general store, proceeding in the direction of the stand of barrel cactus.

"I believe that, for Hot Throat, the contest is over," Diablito said.

As the villagers stood gawking at the dark, an explosion ripped a jagged hole of light above the ground on the far side of the cactus field. Hot Throat's craft rose, then stopped, hovering high in the night and glowing, as Diablito had imagined, like some white-hot cigar. A thunderclap rocked the silent sky, then white light began to materialize and coalesce beneath the ship until an awesome rectangle of white, miles long and miles wide, was formed.

Diablito's straight, ruddy jaw tensed as if anticipating Hot Throat's Revenge; he waited for the whiteness to descend like God's own flyswatter and squash the village and its people back into sand.

Then writing began to appear against the backdrop, letters painted in fiery red and proclaiming: "HOT THROAT-CHILI KING OF THE GALAXY." For a minute stupefied silence, and then laughter broke from the upturned and illuminated

'I would challenge the pepper king of the galaxy to eat one single chili,' said Vasco. 'If he can eat one chili, then he can take my crown and the glory of Los Fuegos Pequeños with him to the sky.'

village faces as they realized it was a swaggering sign, a billboard not a bludgeon, that Hot Throat had somehow caused to appear in the sky.

Amaya wasn't laughing. "What the hell does he mean? He is not the champion," he demanded.

"Relax, *amigo*," Diablito reassured him. "Hot Throat is sleeping like a drunken baby. It is his machine that makes the words, words the boastful creature spat into it before he ever arrived."

For a few moments the sign that, ironically, now proclaimed only the boundless vanity of the alien continued to outshine the moon and stars, then dimmed back into the night. Village necks craned and village eyes strained as Hot Throat's ship accelerated toward the zenith, then twinkled into anonymity amid the thick starscape of the Milky Way.

Once again the yellow velvet light of the torches filled the square. Diablito raised his glass to the villagers. "To Vasco Blanco, the pride of Los Fuegos Pequeños and the chili-eating champion of the galaxy," he said. He looked for Vasco to salute him, to honor him, but the cream-colored Indian with the smooth face was already weaving his way toward the fringe of the village and home, his normally smooth gait wobbled by the peppers' fire and the primal punch of the *pulche*.

Amaya the baker spoke, a strained and patronizing smile screwing up his face: "You know, I sure don't understand where Hot Throat got the idea he could eat peppers . . . I mean, he can't have been around as much as he claimed or he would know better. How does he expect to eat chilis when he can't even hold his *pulche*?" Amaya finished, chortling.

Diablito downed what was left in his glass and bid the villagers goodnight. He would sleep well in the ranch house that was built by his grandfather and left, along with the village, for him to protect.

The people of Los Fuegos Pequeños too began to disperse, as the women crossed themselves, and the men drew heavily on *pulche*, the drink of their ancestors and the food of the ancient gods. 17

Tron, E.T. and Poltergeist: For the kid in you . . .

CREATING CINEMATIC FANTASIES INVOLVING A CHILD'S EYE-VIEW OF THE WORLD CAN REQUIRE A LOT OF GROWN-UP INGENUITY—AS THESE THREE MOVIES PROVE. ED NAHA REPORTS.

It wasn't all that long ago when fantasy, horror, and science fiction films were considered, by most critics, as "kid stuff." During the past two decades, however, films such as *The Haunting*, *The Exorcist*, 2001, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* have proved to even the most ardent of naysayers that the phantasmagoric film genre can be as "adult" as any other.

Now, however, it seems as if a small cadre of filmmakers are bent on returning to the "kid stuff" motif—not in terms of technique, but certainly in terms of plot. Three new big-budgeted films—*Poltergeist*, *E.T.*, and *Tron*—deal, in one form or another, with fantasy perceived from a youthful point of view.

Director Steven Spielberg, who toyed with a child's point of view in *Close Encounters*, has brought us both *E.T.* and *Poltergeist*. As *E.T.*'s director, he has choreographed a meeting between a diminutive alien stranded on Earth and a ten-year-old boy named Elliott. Spielberg has put nearly every child's dream-come-true encounter on the screen.

"What makes it unique," he says of the project, "is that it's a love story between a young boy and a 600- to 800-year-old extraterrestrial from some unknown planet."

"They share so much of what they know about their environments with each other that they come to have a great understanding of each other's problems. Elliott understands that E.T. is lonely and has to get home to survive, to live, and Elliott must save his life. E.T. senses that Elliott is a victim of a separated household. His father is in Mexico with another woman, and his mother is trying to recover from the trauma of the separation. Within a suburban American household, Elliott's an abandoned child."

Suburbia holds yet more shocks for everyday kids in *Poltergeist*, a film which Spielberg has produced from a screenplay he co-wrote. In this tidy terror tale, director Tobe Hooper (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, tv's *Salem's Lot*) guides the Freeling family, a couple with three children, into a spic-and-span home populated by feisty spirits who resent the fact that the family's swimming pool has been constructed on an ancient burial ground—a solid beef in anyone's book.

Although, unlike Hooper's earlier work, the movie is not excessively violent or bloody, it does generate large doses of terror by concentrating on the way the three children react to the presence of the poltergeists.

Referring to the kid-alien connection in *CESK* and the kid-ghost pairing in *Poltergeist*, Spielberg acknowledges: "Both films actively center on the children. The difference is that while *Close Encounters* is about awe and wonder, *Poltergeist* creates great jeopardy and dread."

Despite both film's rather simplistic plots, neither was simplistic in execution. *Poltergeist*, for instance, features effects by George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic outfit (with over a hundred effects scenes, as opposed to *Raiders*

of the *Lost Ark*'s forty), and *E.T.* features dazzling alien and spaceship designs. Not quite the space-on-\$5-a-day format once used in such kidfests as *Invaders from Mars* or *The Invisible Boy*.

Although *Poltergeist* and *E.T.* concern children, they can't really be termed "kiddie" movies in that they place their small fry in very real, very adult situations. *Tron*, on the other hand, adds an extra new wrinkle to the kid-fantasy format by tossing adults into a netherworld spawned by a juvenile-inspired passion—the playing of video games. The film is, in fact, an eye-boggling video game come alive on the screen.

The movie begins in the real world, where a young computer genius named Flynn (Jeff Bridges)—owner, operator, and resident virtuoso of a video game arcade—is trying to break into the computer system of ENCOM, a huge communications conglomerate. A former employee of ENCOM, Flynn is searching for evidence that the video game programs he wrote are being pilfered by Dillinger (David Warner), a fairly nasty ENCOM staffer.

Before he can gather the necessary evidence, Flynn is blasted by the system's Master Computer Program. Hit by a laser beam, Flynn is transformed into a flurry of electron particles which are absorbed into another dimension: an electronic world within the ENCOM computer system where energy lives and breathes, where computer programs are the alter-ego of their out-world programmers, and where video games are played for real—with death as the penalty for losing.

The rest of the film is, essentially, a quest, with a mini-Flynn and his newfound electronic friends (played by Cindy Morgan, Bruce Boxleitner, and Barnard Hughes) battling the forces of computerized evil in a world dazzling enough to make Oz look like a low-income neighborhood.

In order to create an electronic dimension breathtaking enough to appeal to juveniles of all ages, director/writer Steven Lisberger enlisted the aid of futuristic industrial designer Syd Mead (*Blade Runner*, *Star Trek*), comic book artist Mobius, and high-tech commercial artist Peter Lloyd to handle all preliminary sketches depicting both the video realm and its denizens. Harrison Ellenshaw (*The Black Hole*, *Star Wars*) and Richard Taylor were then given the chore of handling the visual effects.

Tron's special effects, however, really had to be special, and in order to bring the helter-skelter world of video games to the screen, a small fleet of computers were employed. Fifty-three of the film's minutes were generated, all or in part, by a computer.

"The irony of it all," says Lisberger, "is that *Tron* is a film about computers and video games that is totally dependent upon computers."

The idea of *Tron* occurred to Lisberger a few years back when he began playing video games. "They seemed to



In *Poltergeist*, young Carol Anne Freeling (Heather O'Rourke) screams for her parents when malign spirits, no longer just clowning around, attempt to capture her in her own bedroom. "Poltergeist" means 'noisy ghost' or, in the vernacular, 'bratty ghost,'" says producer Steven Spielberg. "It's not to be taken lightly, because in our movie they are anything but bratty. They are violent and very volatile."



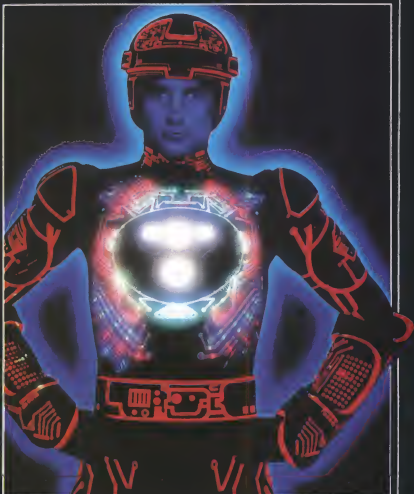
Supernatural phenomena have their funhouse aspect when Robbie Freeling (Oliver Robins) and his mother find their normal world turned on end ...



... but strangeness turns to sheer horror when a large oak tree crashes through Robbie's bedroom window and wrenches him from the house.



As both producer and director of *E.T.*, Spielberg (above) gives a pointer to Henry Thomas as Elliott, a young earthling who has a close encounter with an extraterrestrial.



In the forthcoming *Tron*, Bruce Boxleitner plays the title role, a rebellious video warrior inhabiting a computer world controlled by a despotic master program.

Poltergeist

Even the parental bedroom is unsafe when ghosts play havoc with the laws of gravity—as Diane Freeling (JoBeth Williams) discovers. *Poltergeist*'s set was tilttable, thus allowing the actress to "fall" up the wall.



Two visiting parapsychologists, played by Beatrice Straight and Richard Lawson, can do little to combat the mysterious forces making war on the Freeling family.



Spielberg sets up one of *Poltergeist*'s supernatural shocks. Industrial Light and Magic, George Lucas's crackerjack effects team, conjured up more than a hundred effects shots for the film.



Freeling finds himself facing every homeowner's nightmare: a house inhabited by hostile spirits. Claims Spielberg, who also wrote the story on which the film is based: "Every fourth person you know probably has had an experience with a poltergeist or knows someone who has."



Diane Freeling learns the drawbacks of the "buddy" system when some unexpected neighbors surface from their watery grave.



Spielberg (right) and director Tobe Hooper (far right) on the *Poltergeist* set. Rumor has it that, during production, Spielberg seized control of most of the directorial chores.



Spielberg surveys his homegrown spaceship between shots on the set of *E.T.*, a movie described as a children's film for adults.



An average American home is turned into a decontamination chamber when the extraterrestrial enters the scene.



Elliott's family gets a big hand—actually, two—from a worker in a decontamination suit. The arrival of the alien takes the family from their everyday suburban existence and plunges them into a surreal world of intrigue and adventure.

The citizens in this search party receive an unexpected shock when the alien is discovered in their midst.

Tron



A video-game tank patrols a dark alleyway in the energy-based universe of *Tron*. Many of the movie's special effects were generated by computers.



Three live-action video games begin a race to the death through a bizarre metamorphosis, turning themselves into a motorcycle-like vehicle whose solid image is in fact a computer-generated simulation.



And the race is on, through the futuristic landscape of the video universe.



Jeff Bridges, as an electronic warrior, sits at the tank's controls. All *Tron*'s video-game characters have alter egos in the "real" universe.



Using his identity disc, Tron (Bruce Boxleitner) deflects a deadly pellet of light which has been hurled at him by another warrior.

come alive," he says. "The whole world of electronics seemed to spring to life through these games. The games seemed to be a window into another dimension. Very simply, we take a human into that dimension in our film. We push him through that window. In one form or another, the computer is involved in every scene taking place in the electronic world. *Tron* is structured similarly to *The Wizard of Oz* in that it presents two distinct realities housing, essentially, the same characters."

"We've created something pretty startling through computer simulation," says Richard Taylor. "The very basis of such simulation is the fact that at no time are you ever plagued by the restraints that traditional effects dictate. There are no miniatures to worry about. No matte paintings. For instance, if you're doing a scene in *Close Encounters* in which a saucer buzzes people, basically you're integrating a model into a live-action scene using a computerized camera. There are physical limitations to what that camera can do. There are limitations to what that spacecraft can do.

"These limitations, in turn, cause the choreography of the effects scenes to fall between certain planes. In *Tron*, using computer simulation, we have no physical limitation in reference to our objects. There are no physical limitations to the viewpoint of the eye, of the camera. We can move through 'three space' freely. We can be inside of an object, pull out through its skin, and then be miles away from it, all in ten seconds. You don't use models at all.

"In computer simulation scenes, you can be absolutely true to the laws of perspective and motion. You never have the audience sitting there trying to figure out how the scene was done because something looked a little fake, either. It seems totally real, totally whole."

One of the ways *Tron*'s digital scenes were generated was comparatively simple. An artist's rendering of an object was plotted in three views (top, side, and bottom) on a large sheet of graph paper. These drawings were fed into a computer, which then figured the measurements of the object in three dimensions. The object's frame-by-frame movement could then be plotted three-dimensionally by the computer.

"In this way," continues Taylor, "you don't have different elements to match up. Everything is put down in one frame. It has the same texture, the same light source, the same perspective.

"Each frame has to be given color and texture. This is done by painting with light. In computer simulation, you never photograph a full picture. You're photographing a point of light, a 'pixel.' These points of light then form a finished picture. It's sort of like the way the lights on a billboard form a finished word—only instead of eight thousand lights on a billboard, we have a couple of million points in a frame. Literally everything in the film's electronic game world is made of light.

"The problem in showing a world like this is, of course, to keep it something less than surreal. You can get carried away with it if you're not too careful. When you're creating a character out of light, you can saturate him, making him too bright. If you see too much of something that's too brilliant, you don't enjoy it. We designed this film so that everything is kept down at a compressed level so that the power of the light is saved for the more explosive moments.

"Steve Lisberger came up with certain psychological connotations to certain colors. There's something in your DNA code that seems to allow you to watch blue without being aggravated. It's a cool color. Warm colors such as gold or ochre, however, make you tense. We used the powerful colors—the reds, the yellows, and the whites—only during key moments. The bad guys wear red suits that can change to brighter hues. The good guys are basically blues. This stylistic treatment kept it from being too powerful and unwatchable."

"With the amount of freedom we had in color and exposure choice," adds Harrison Ellenshaw, "changing every part of every frame, we could have made this look like *Candyland*. We could have made *One from the Heart* look like the inside of a combat boot.

For the actors involved in the electronic sequences, the fantasy realm of *Tron* offered some harsh realities. "There was a lot of work they had to do using only their imaginations," says Lisberger. "They had to react to an entire world that wouldn't be computer-created for another year. We did a lot of story-boarding to trigger their imaginations. We also had some video games on the set to keep them in the spirit of things."

"It was pretty awful," recalls actress Cindy Morgan. "We were filmed against a black velvet background for fourteen weeks. It's all a big blur to me now. I would come home every day with black velvet under my fingernails. Every day we'd have to get into these strange skintight outfits. They'd twist my hair into these tiny braids and jam it under a skintight cap. We all had to wear white makeup, too. We really got tired of seeing each other in tights after a few weeks."

Despite the pain, the finished effect was worth it, she feels. "It's not a kid's movie," she states flatly. "It's very complicated. Sure, it's nonstop action, just like a video game, but there are some strange undertones in there as well.

"At the beginning of the film, we see these kids in an arcade playing a video game. Two video warriors are fighting. One of the kids yells, 'Great! I killed him!' Then you're suddenly in the electronic world where a real video warrior is lying dead. When you're playing these games in our world, real flesh-and-blood people are dying in that alternate world.

"The electronic world is populated by your alter ego. Very seldom does your alter ego have anything to do with the 'real person' in the outside world. Bruce Boxleitner, for instance, is my character's boyfriend in the real world. I boss him around, and he does whatever I tell him to. In the computer world, though, he's *Tron*—the greatest warrior of them all. I listen to everything he says. The movie points out that, in the real world, what you put forward socially is not necessarily what's deep down inside you. In the electronic world, however, there's no room for hypocrisy. Survival is everything."

Although *Tron* does contain some bizarre symbolism, it will be the movie's visual clout that will spell success or failure at the box office. "I think *Tron* will do for computer-generated images what *Star Wars* did for motion-control camera work," says Harrison Ellenshaw.

It's clearly that, in contemporary moviemaking, conjuring up images based on childlike fantasies can no longer be considered kid stuff. **17**

FUN IN THE DARK

Photographs and Text by
Deborah Wian

TZ'S ROVING PHOTOGRAPHER TAKES US
ON A HORROR-HOUSE TOUR.

Cobwebs brushed my cheek. The corpse on the floor began moving. A skeleton in chains dangled mournfully overhead, and a ghoul licked his bloody lips as he sized me up for his next meal. From behind me came the squeaking of rats; they sounded unnaturally large. Suddenly a wild-eyed Norman Bates leapt out of *Psycho*'s shower scene and came toward me with a knife . . .

No, I wasn't dreaming. This was all part of my job. I was simply on another assignment from *Twilight Zone*—taking a Spook's Tour of the neighborhood horror-houses.

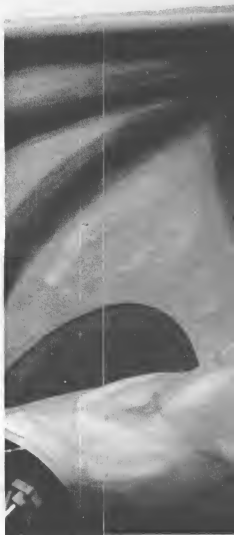
My journey began in typically high style with a subway ride out to Coney Island, where, in the amusement park known as Astroland, I found myself face to face with the Devil himself, complete with bat wings and pitchfork. He's the figurehead for a spook-house called **Dante's Inferno**; and in



case you're unaware of his intentions, he's got a good grip on the yard-long tongue of a hapless *djinn* whose upside-down head appears to be roasting in hellfire. One almost feels sorry for the fellow.

One head of a three-headed dragon watched me warily as I entered. The Inferno, as I soon discovered, offers traditional horror-house fare: a mechanical ride that recklessly spins you around in the dark, nearly bumping into a host of leering nasties that pop out at you along the way.

"One head watched
me warily . . ."





My appetite whetted, I couldn't resist the biceps and grin of the cyclops atop a nearby attraction, **Spook-A-Rama**. It was hard to tell whether he was guarding the place or inviting me to enter. I opted for the latter and clutching my Nikon, went in.

After cringing through an assortment of menacing encounters on the ride, I got a backstage tour with **Spook-A-Rama's** owner, Paul Kleinstein. He explained that most of the mechanical monsters who'd shrieked at me only minutes before had been made right there in the workshop over



"... a hapless djinn."

"Face to face with
.the Devil himself."

the thirty years that the attraction's been open. The mold for a Frankenstein monster was hanging from the ceiling; this sort of structure is later covered with a plastic called Celastic and painted with luminescent paint, enabling it to glow under black light.

Seated on a workbench backstage, this skeleton (p. 58) looked as innocent as a puppet by the light of my flash. But when things like this fly at you in the darkness, coupled with eerie laughter and the soft touch of "cobwebs" (actually, string) on your face, you tend not to notice the mechanics.

Next stop on my Spook's Tour was Playland in Rye, New York, home of **The Flying Witch**. On its facade I immediately recognized the familiar upside-down face of the unfortunate *djinn*. This time, however, he was keeping his tongue to himself. Before plunging through the show's forbidding-looking doors, I admired the



"It was hard to tell whether he was guarding the place or inviting me to enter."



"... as innocent as a puppet."

building's lavishly illustrated front wall, where mischievous skeletons tormented a rather sexy witch. Nearby a horned dragon looked life-size and ready to spout flame—but he was no more bizarre-looking than the car I climbed into, which whirled me into the darkness.

In contrast to the lurid, old-time carny exteriors of New York's horror-houses, **The Haunted Mansion** in Longbranch, New Jersey, sports a serene, rustic-looking facade, preferring to save its frights for inside. Here I discovered that the new trend in spookshows is to dispense with the rides; instead, à la the traditional "funhouse," you're forced to *walk* through the shadowy passages—which makes you much more vulnerable to the horrors lying in wait for you.



"The mold for a Frankenstein monster."

These aren't mechanical horrors of the jack-in-the-box school, but rather living, breathing actors in the roles of classic murderers eager for fresh victims. In a sense, then, the *Petit Guignol*, or puppet show, has been replaced by the *Grand*—the theater of blood. Jack the Ripper chops the head off a screaming woman. Lizzie Borden steps out of her Victorian parlor and comes after you with an axe. You're even greeted at the door by a live ghoul, played by general manager Laura Hornung (being touched up on p. 60 by resident makeup artist Teri Rossien).

The Mansion's shock techniques are downright Hitchcockian. Dark tunnels take you to the famous shower scene from *Psycho*, complete with the body of a poor dead woman hanging



"Mischievous skeletons tormented
a rather sexy witch."



"... lifesize and
ready to
spout flame."

"The car I
climbed into..."

out of the bathtub. The corpse is merely a prop; meanwhile, though, her demented killer, Norman Bates, is crouching unseen behind the set. Just when you're satisfied that what you're seeing is simply a still-life tribute to Robert Bloch, Bates leaps up with a knife, terrifying everyone out of their wits and onto the next scene (which, in this case, is the corpse of Bates's mother in the fruit cellar). In fact, according to manager Horning, fear is the Haunted Mansion's primary source of locomotion: visitors are literally scared from one scene to the next.

Another source of fear is the uncertainty over whether the figures before you are man or merely mannequin. Some are the latter; others turn out to be alive. The uneasiness comes in never knowing for sure. On enter-

ing the show, for example, you come upon the sight of two vampires in coffins. In the dim light both appear to be waxworks—until one begins walking toward you. From then on it's a chain reaction of events, and it's twenty minutes or more before you're safely outside again.

The use of sound adds still another dimension to the shocks. In the "Rat Tunnel," for instance, you hear the hungry rodents—and also feel them nipping at your ankles. The Mansion's staff claims to have a collection of shoes found in the tunnel after each group leaves.

Sounds of horror also pervade **The Haunted Castle** at the Great Adventure amusement park in New Jersey. This is another walk-through (or stumble-through) scare show featuring

combinations of live acts and mannequins. Before entering, you pass an ominous-looking sign:

**WARNING
HAUNTED CASTLE CONTAINS
SCENES WHICH ARE SCARY
& GORY.
ANYONE YOUNG OR OLD WHO
OBJECTS TO BEING SCARED
DO NOT ENTER**

Once inside, you find yourself in darkness, surrounded by the clanking of chains, the rattle of unseen creatures, and peals of hideous laughter. These sounds—live, not recorded—keep you on edge from the very first step of your journey.

As you wander the Castle's shadowy halls, you're confronted with a collection of gruesomely mangled



"... preferring to save its frights for inside."



Haunted Mansion manager
Laura Hornung,
makeup artist
Teri Rossien.



"Another walk-through
(or stumble-through)
scare show..."



"A collection of gruesomely mangled mannequins."



Erik Nielsen transforms himself into "The Wraithlord."



Helen Gray as "Mephisto."

mannequins that, in the dim light, look unnervingly authentic. Meanwhile, live ghouls like Helen Gray's "Mephisto" are lurking nearby, ready to jump out and scare you. When large groups enter the Castle, I'm told, the ghouls stagger themselves in different hiding places so as to scare guests at both ends of the line. This way no one will be spared a first-hand fright.

The young men and women who perform this vital service may look, in their costumes, like fallen angels, but they jokingly refer to themselves as "fallen clowns." Backstage, I watched as some of them made themselves up for the day's haunt: Larry Aleshire

turned into "Boris the Spider," Mike Korzenok became "The Slasher," and Erik Nielsen transformed himself into "The Wraithlord."

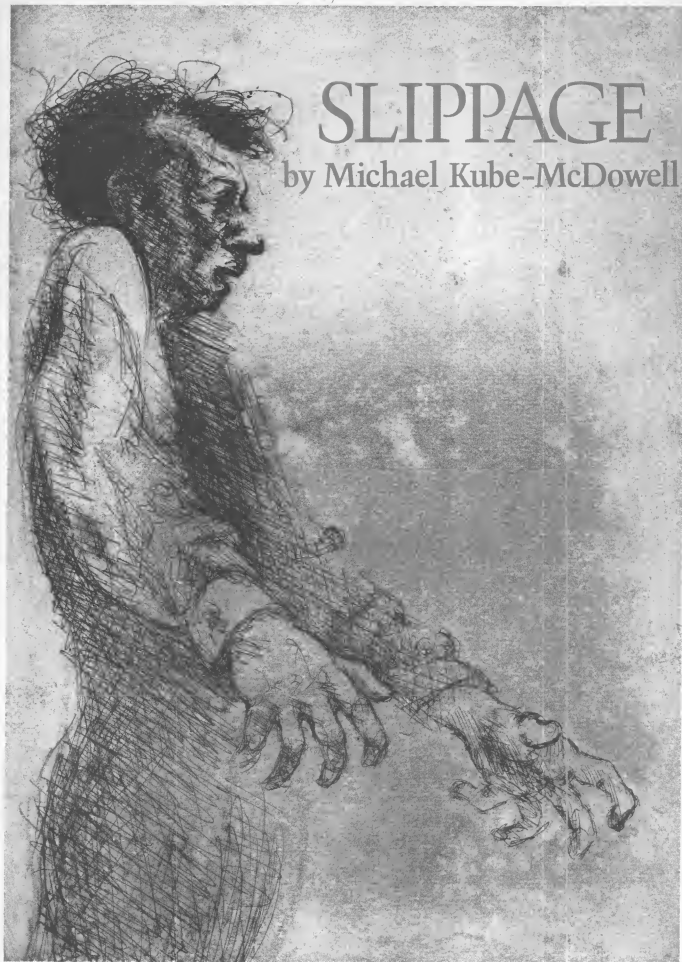
A ghoul's life, of course, isn't all fun and games. I talked to a few of them and learned that, in return for a scare, they take their own share of abuse. Frightened children have been known to attack them physically, even though the actors themselves are never permitted to touch anyone. In times of crisis, they defend each other by scaring off the attackers.

As in the Haunted Mansion, another of the Castle's crew's favorite tricks is to pose as lifeless manne-

quins, then suddenly lunge at the unwary visitor. Being a fan of old tv horror shows myself, I can testify that there's nothing quite like having something pop out at you in the dark—including your own reflection in the mirror after a late-night episode of *Chiller Theater*. Thinking you're safe when you're actually in danger may be a kind of reverse paranoia, but that's quickly dispelled as "prop" after "prop" screams and comes to life. After an experience like this, you may find yourself looking at the mannequins in department store windows with a good deal of suspicion—and a tiny shudder. **17**

SLIPPAGE

by Michael Kube-McDowell



... IN WHICH A MR. RICHARD HALL DISCOVERS THAT EVERYTHING GROWS OLD AND WEARS AWAY—EVEN THE PAST.

It did not begin as a time of madness. Richard Hall tossed his rain-dampened ski cap into the nearest chair and ran his fingers back through his thinning hair. "Elaine?" he called.

She appeared at the bedroom door and moved to hug him. "You look frazzled."

"Am," he said, face buried in her hair. "Fought half the morning with a dimwit from Human Resources who tried to tell me I don't know my Social Security number. Took the IRS's word over mine. Hal!"

"Take a short loving recharge," she invited.

"Glad to," he said, tightening his embrace.

"That's enough," she said, and pushed him back. "Choose: start dinner or get the mail in. My hands were full."

"Mail, thank you." He took the key from her hand and the stairs to the lobby, returning with six pieces of junk mail—one promising "Sexually Oriented Advertisements"—one bill, a letter from Elaine's mom, and a tattered copy of the *Cross Creek Weekly Chronicle*. Cross Creek, which was every bit as small as its name implied, had been Hall's birthplace and home for seventeen years. His mother still lived there, and the subscription was an annual gift from her, about which he had never had the courage to say, "Please don't bother." The paper came an average of three weeks late, by the cheapest class of mail, and the high point of it was frequently a list of where townspeople had gone on vacation or the weights of the 4-H sheep.

Settling back on the sofa and kicking off his shoes, Hall ripped out the staples and turned to the front page. He immediately frowned, and read quickly.

"Elaine?" he called. "Listen to this."

"If it's the balance on the Total Charge bill, I'd rather not hear it," she called back.

"No—something in the *Chronicle*. They're closing my old high school."

"Why?" Elaine appeared, bringing him a cold soft drink.

"According to this, the school board decided that they could get better value sending the students over to the new consolidated high school in Atlasburg. Cross Creek High School was too run-down and had too few students. So the last day of classes will be—" Hall looked at his watch—"tomorrow. Oh—and they're going to hold an all-class reunion as a kind of going-away party."

"When's that? You'll want to go, won't you?"

"It's..." Hall scanned for the date. "It was yesterday," he said, his voice dropping.

"Oh, Rick, I'm sorry. You missed it."

"I've been meaning to get back and visit the teachers, my old friends... what happened to the six years, Elaine? It doesn't feel like it's been that long," he said, shaking his head. "Listen to this: 'Class officers will be assisting Mr. Hutchins and Principal Jane Warden in contacting all graduates.' Jim Harris is our class officer, and he has my address. I should have heard from them before this."

Elaine moved next to him and rubbed his shoulder, and he smiled at her.

"I feel cheated. It would have meant a lot to be able to be there. I haven't really kept in touch with some people that were good friends, either."

"It's two hundred kilometers away," Elaine said, trying to let him off his own hook.

"I could have written."

"I'm surprised your mom didn't let you know."

"So am I." The timer on the oven began ringing, signaling that dinner was ready, and they rose together to rescue it. Cross Creek High was forgotten for the time.

But that night, after Elaine had fallen asleep beside him, Richard Hall lay in the darkness with the hum of the clock and the creaking of the walls, and thought about high school and the friends he had lost track of, and felt alone.

He eased out of bed without disturbing his wife, and moved quietly to the den. It was only ninety-three in Cross Creek, and a good friend should be able to excuse a call at that hour. Hall dug the small white address book out of the back recesses of the desk. Some of the entries, he saw, were very old.

Too old, in fact. The number he had for Jim Harris was no longer in service. The same was true when he tried calling his closest friend. The phone of Ruth, whom he had been both friend and boyfriend to, was answered by a sleepy man who said gruffly, "You got a wrong number." And the phone of a teacher who'd been more than a teacher rang thirty times without being answered.

Hall returned to bed, feeling both anger at himself and a deep depression. Something good that had been his had slipped away, and in the darkness it was easy to believe that it was forever beyond his grasp.

A few days later, Richard and Elaine arrived home from work close enough together to take the same elevator to the fifth floor.

"I'll bet dinner didn't cook itself tonight," she said.

He smiled. "I won't take that bet."

When they reached the apartment, she disappeared for a moment into the kitchen. "I was right,"

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she said on her return.

"Want me to fix it tonight?"

"No. I want you to take me out."

"Suggestions?"

"The little lakeside restaurant outside of North Springfield."

"Our old summer rendezvous. The one where we had the wedding reception."

"That's the one."

"That's a good hour's drive away—and I'm not even sure I can find it again."

"You'd better be able to!"

Hall showed a mock grimace. "We'd better get going, then."

The Halls were generally silent while driving—Richard disliked being distracted. But as they neared the lake, Elaine turned away from watching the scenery—it was growing too dark to see well—and spoke.

"Do you think they still have our picture on the wall?"

"I don't see why not. Pictures of customers are the only decoration they use."

"It's been a while since we've been here. Maybe they move the old ones out every so often."

Hall pursed his lips. "Would you be angry if I couldn't remember the name of this place?"

"No, because you never remember anything. But I won't tell you what it is—you'll have to work for it."

"The Beachcraft . . . the Beachhouse . . ."

"Something like that."

"Beachbelch . . ."

"Oh, come on!"

"Beachwood!" he said triumphantly.

"That's it."

"I can't claim any credit—just saw it on a sign back there. Isn't this the exit up here?"

"I think so."

They turned off the highway, headlights sweeping across the undisturbed grass-covered sandy mounds found everywhere near the lake. A kilometer farther on, the road turned to parallel the shore.

"It's not too far now," Elaine said.

"No."

They both watched the roadside ahead, expecting at any moment to see the sign, the building, lights, parked cars.

"That's odd," Hall said, frowning. "I was positive it was just a bit after the road turned."

The car bored through the lakeside night for a minute more, and then Richard slowed the car and pulled onto the shoulder. "We must have passed it right at the beginning, when we were talking," he said as he made a wide U-turn. "It was never that well lit."

"But it sits right out in the open—right on the shore. We couldn't have missed it. I don't think we went far enough."

"I'm not going to drive all the way to Cleveland. If we didn't pass it, then we're on the wrong road."

They drove back the way they had come, confused.

"There's someone walking," Elaine said suddenly, as the headlights picked up the shape on the lake side of the road. "Let's ask him."

Hall was already slowing down, and rolled down his window. The rushing roar of the small breakers filled the car for the first time. "Sir?" he called. "Could you help us with directions?"

The man, carrying a fishing rod and tackle box, crossed the road slowly and came to Hall's window. He was at least sixty years old. "If I can."

"We're trying to find a restaurant called the Beachwood."

The old man pointed at the sands across the road. "Right there."

Richard looked where the old man was pointing. "There's nothing there."

"That's right. She burned down, mebbe six months ago—mebbe more. If it were day, you could see the pilings she sat on; that's all that's left."

"Oh, what a shame!" Elaine said.

They thanked the fisherman, then watched him fold back into the darkness behind them as they drove away.

"Home?" Hall asked.

"Nonsense. You owe me dinner."

"The Hearth?" he offered.

"That will be acceptable. Drive on, James."

"Yes, Madame," he said, but the heartiness was false. For the second time in a week, Richard Hall felt the tug of something lost.

The graphics department supervisor made his way slowly through the maze of drawing tables in the room, dropping off yellow paycheck envelopes as he went.

"Afternoon, Richard," he said as he reached Hall's table. He rifled through the remaining checks. "How's your day going?"

"Pretty well."

The supervisor reached the end of the bundle of checks and started again at the top envelope, frowning. "You didn't get your check early, did you?"

"No."

"And you weren't on an unpaid leave these last two weeks?"

"I wasn't on any kind of leave. I was right here."

"Well, your day just took a turn for the worse. There's no check here for you."

"Let me see."

"Don't you trust me? It's no; here."

"So what am I supposed to do?"

"Well, you'll have to go on down to payroll and

"I'm beginning to feel like a victim of a new crime—you take a guy and ignore him, pretend he's not there, until he cracks up. I feel like Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*, only there's no guardian angel."

get it straightened out."

Hall started to push back his chair, and the supervisor held up his hand. "Oh, not now. We need those charts for the taping this afternoon. Go down on your lunch hour," he said, and walked away to complete his rounds.

"I can't wait to tell you I quit," Hall said in a diplomatically hushed voice, glaring at his supervisor's receding back. He pulled the phone toward him, consulted a piece of paper in his wallet, and dialed.

"Concept Execution. May I help you?"

"Personnel."

"Thank you." A new voice: "Mary Anders, Personnel. May I help you?"

"This is Richard Hall," Hall said, keeping his voice low. "I submitted an application to you several weeks ago—I wanted to make certain it was all in order."

"Yes, Mr. Hall, I remember. I'm glad you called. We recently reviewed your application when filling an opening, and found it is not yet complete. We still need a copy of your birth certificate and your educational transcripts."

"I sent for both the day I applied," Hall said.

"The transcript is coming to you directly—I can write and make sure it's been sent. If you recall, I explained that my original birth certificate is gone, and I'm trying to get a duplicate from the state. It should be here soon, and I'll see that you get it right away."

"Very good. By the way, we've also had a little difficulty tracking down one of the references you gave us. Would you confirm that we have the correct address? 'Spark and Son, 213 High Street—'"

"Cross Creek, Pennsylvania," he finished for her. "That's correct. My supervisor was John Spark, the owner."

"Has the company moved or gone out of business, to your knowledge?"

"No, Spark and Son is kind of a town fixture. I can't imagine them moving. I can try and check on that, too, though."

When he had hung up, Hall turned to the artist working at the board to his right.

"Chris?"

"Yeah?" Chris Wood laid down his pen and looked at Hall.

"Is it possible to catch a disease that causes everyone to try and ignore you?"

"Why?"

"Because if there is, I've got it," he said, and laughed.

There was a thick collection of mail, and Hall looked through it as he walked to the apartment. He shook his head unhappily as he walked through the door.

"Have I been especially bad lately?" he asked. Elaine, who was seated on the couch watching television.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm beginning to feel like a victim."

"Of what?" she asked, tilting her head quizzically.

"Of a new crime—you take a guy and ignore him, pretend he's not there, until he cracks up. I feel like Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*, only there's no guardian angel."

"What's making you feel that way?"

"Here—here's the perfect example. There's ten pieces of junk mail here, all with your name. Two even have your maiden name."

"My lucky day," she said, smiling and taking them from him. "When they're in your name, you throw them out before I can see them. What else, besides the mail?"

"No check for me this morning. I had to spend my whole lunch hour fighting with payroll, and I still don't have one. I wasn't in the computer, that's how bad they screwed up, and they couldn't process a check by hand until Monday."

"That's enough to ruin your day," she agreed.

"I can't wait to get out of there. Say—I didn't get to see yesterday's mail. Was there anything from the state on my birth certificate?"

Elaine hesitated, but only briefly. "No. Nothing came."

"It figures. Where's tonight's newspaper?"

"I left it in the kitchen."

"Okay." When he had disappeared through the swinging saloon-style doors, Elaine moved quickly to the buffet and gathered up several folded sheets of paper that were lying there in a neat pile. She buried them in the back of the end table drawer nearest her chair, closing it just as Richard reappeared.

"What do you have there?"

"Oh, just some trash," Elaine said, flustered.

"Well, don't put it in there. Give it to me and I'll put it in the compactor."

"I don't—"

"Come on, give it to me while I'm still standing up."

"It's not really trash, not yet."

"Are you trying to hide something from me?"

"No—I—"

"You are! Get them out. I want to see them."

"No!" she said angrily. "They're private."

"Come on, Elaine, it took you too long to think of that. What could they be that they're so terrible I can't see them?"

Slowly she retrieved the papers from the drawer and held them out. "I would have shown them to you. I just didn't want you to see them tonight, feeling the way you do. Some of the things you said—"

Hall took the papers gently, and reversed them so that he could read them. The first was from the university he had graduated from and Elaine had attended for a year. Elaine stood up and crossed the room, standing with her back to him as he read.

"Can't find my records to issue a transcript," he said. "You're right. I could have done without seeing that tonight." He unfolded the second sheet, which bore the seal of the State of Pennsylvania—Bureau of Vital Statistics.

"Oh, no," was all he said, very quietly. He moved it to the bottom of the pile and looked at the final paper. It was smaller, of stiffer paper, and very official.

He looked up from it at his wife. "Why did you change the title to the car?" he asked, and his voice had acquired a hard edge.

"I didn't," she said, shaking her head. "I don't know why it came that way."

"The car used to be in both our names," he said more loudly. "Now it's only in yours! You're the only one who could do that."

"They must have made a mistake printing the registration—" she started. But she did not get to finish the sentence.

"You! It's been you doing these things!" He stepped forward, trembling from the force of will needed to restrain himself. "Why, Elaine? Why?"

She stepped back. "You're scaring me, Richard. Please don't come near me," she said in the calmest voice she could muster.

"I don't deserve this," he said, tossing the papers on the floor behind him. He had lowered his voice, but that made it even more threatening.

"Please, Richard . . ."

He stepped toward her, and she turned to run to the bedroom with its locking door. She was too slow; he caught her by the shoulder of her loose-fitting blouse and yanked her back, the thin fabric tearing to the seam as he did. "Why are you doing this?" he shouted, his breath hot on her face. "What did I do to you?"

"Richard, I didn't—"

"You want me out? You don't have to make me think I'm crazy to get it." He was shaking her, holding her by the upper arms in a powerful and painful grip. In the face of his anger, her strength had fled; without his hands, she would have collapsed. "You've got it, if that's what you want! I



won't stay and let you mess with my mind!" He flung her into a chair, and, pausing only to scoop up his keys, stalked from the apartment.

Elaine Hall half-stumbled, half-crawled to the chair beside the phone. She could not control the trembling in her limbs, and misdialed twice before making the connection she wanted.

"Chris? This is Elaine." Her voice communicated more than her words.

"Are you all right?" Wood asked immediately.

"I—I think so. Yes, I am. I'm just a little shook up. Can you come over, Chris? I need you to be here—and Rick, he—" The tears came streaming from her eyes. "Rick's going to need both our help."

Reassured by the presence of a full fuel tank, Richard Hall turned up the radio to a level that precluded coherent thought and simply drove. Presently he became aware of where he was: on the highway that would bring him nearest to Cross Creek. Once he had realized that fact, he did not think about it further.

It was nearly eleven-thirty when he turned off the engine, parked in front of the wood frame house in which he had grown up. There were no lights on inside, but by the glow of the porch lamp he could see that the house's paint was departing in long, ragged strips. A cloud of insects—gnats, mosquitoes, and the occasional bulk of a moth—circled in the halo of yellow.

Hall climbed out of the car to find that the street was as quiet as it had ever been. Only his footsteps on the walk and the *chirrup-chirrup* of crickets broke the silence. The doorbell button moved under his finger, but there was no sound inside the house, so Hall opened the screen door to knock.

After a dozen heavy blows with his fist, Hall stepped back to look at the front of the house. A



light now showed at the window marking his parents' bedroom, and he followed his mother's progress to the front door by the other lights that came on, one by one.

Finally he heard a rustling on the other side of the door, and realized he had not thought of what he would say, how he would explain his presence. Before he could consider the question, though, the front door was yanked open to the limit of the security chain, and a woman's face, old and marked by suspicion, peered out through the gap.

"Mom—hi. How are you doing?" Hall said, smiling self-consciously.

Anger crossed the woman's face. "You disgusting drunk!" she screeched. "I'm not your mother. Go away now, and leave a woman to sleep. Go, or I'll call the police."

For punctuation, she slammed the door shut with surprising strength.

Thank God I've found you," Chris Wood said, his voice showing his relief.

Hall stepped away from the motel door reluctantly and let his friend in. "I wish you hadn't."

"That's very well for you," Wood said, sitting on the edge of the bed, "but I've used almost all my vacation time to do it. Elaine is very worried about you. I am too, only I'm a little more confused than she is."

"She didn't need to worry," Hall said, closing the door. "I'm all right."

"You might have called her and let her know."

Hall moved to the window and held the curtains apart with his hands so that he could look out. "I was afraid to."

"She's eager to have you back. She's not angry."

"You don't understand," Hall said, turning to

face him. "I was afraid she wouldn't be there—or that she would be, and wouldn't know me."

"Why would you think that?"

"Do you know where I went the night I ran out?"

"No. If I'd known that, I'd have found you sooner."

"I drove to Cross Creek to see my mother. And she didn't know who I was."

"Come on, Rick. You're not making any sense."

"She denied that I was her son! She slammed the door on me, and after I got it open again, she slammed it a second time."

"Could she have been angry? You'd have gotten there late, wouldn't you—"

"No, no! She was right—I'm *not* her son."

"She's getting on in years, isn't she—"

"You're not listening to me!" Hall shouted.

"She'd *never* known me!"

"I wish you'd listen to yourself," Wood said gently. "You're standing there screaming some very strange things at your old friend."

Hall sighed, and sat down in the nearest chair. "I thought all those things you're trying to say," he said softly. "I thought them in about the first ten seconds, and then I couldn't. I got her to open the door again, Lord knows how. There's been a photograph—" Hall took a deep breath—"hanging above Mom's couch for almost ten years. A picture of the four of us, taken when Diane was graduating from high school."

"Diane's the oldest, right?"

Hall nodded deeply. "The picture is still hanging there, but I'm not in it anymore. There's no blank space—nothing's been cut out—Diane and Kris are just standing a little closer together."

"Now do you understand? Now do you know why I was afraid to call Elaine or go home? Can you imagine what it would feel like to go home to your wife and have her deny that you are what you think you are? That would be too much, Chris. I'd crack."

"She's there, and she isn't going to deny you. She wants you."

Hall did not seem to hear. "I've never believed in God, Chris. Maybe—maybe He's finally decided He resents that. No, I don't really believe that. I'm trying to be rational. But the things that have been happening—they just aren't."

"You mean the college records—and the registration..."

"The restaurant, not being invited to the reunion, my mom—all of them. They have to be related."

Wood loosened his tie. "How?"

Hall stood up and went to the window again, as if watching for something. "I feel like I'm being followed—like someone is tracking me down the

paths I've taken through life and systematically tearing them up behind me. And getting closer to where I am, all the time. It's as if I've done something terrible, and to punish me they are erasing the traces that I ever existed."

"Rick, please come sit down."

Hall reluctantly complied. "You think I'm crazy, don't you?" he asked tiredly.

Wood chose his words carefully. "I want you to listen to me for a couple of minutes. I'm going to offer you another explanation for the things that you've experienced. And you've got to try to accept it, and believe it, because if you can't—if you can't, Rick, then you're going to have to admit that you've already cracked. There has been a series of unfortunate, but totally explainable occurrences that for some reason, overwork perhaps, has hit you in a very strange way. I'm going to take every single incident and explain it. If I miss any, you tell me."

"The invitation to the reunion—lost in the mail, with a million other pieces of mail this year. The restaurant—does a fire need explanation? You're not the only customers or the only couple that had a picture on those walls."

"The check—would that be the first error ever coming from the man-machine interface? Your mother—the sudden onset of senility. I'm sorry, but it happens. The phone calls—the fact that you hadn't called in years is explanation enough."

"The junk mail—they all buy the same list, and add and remove names all the time. You're off because you don't buy, Elaine's on because she does. The registration—the law has been changed so that joint ownership is automatic, and your wife's name was first, so that's the only one they printed."

"The transcript—eight thousand people in your graduating class? That means they lost zero point triple-zero one percent of their records. The loss of your birth registration—do you think the flood that destroyed the regional office had you in mind when it swept the filing cabinets and microfiche away?"

"The picture in your mother's home—that damning picture. Was that the only picture taken that day? Did they perhaps take one 'just with the girls'?"

"There were a lot of pictures," Hall said slowly.

"Is it impossible that something happened to the picture that's been there for ten years, so that she had to put up another?"

"Or I might have just not seen things clearly," Hall said. "That night—I could have seen anything I wanted to."

"Did I leave anything out?"

"Stark and Son, my first job. They couldn't find them to use as a reference."

"And?"

"I had the wrong address." He rested his head

"The picture in your mother's home—that damning picture."

Was that the only picture taken that day? Did they perhaps take one 'just with the girls'?"

on his folded hands. "I had myself thinking, 'My God, they've moved the building.'" He looked up and sighed. "I want to go home to Elaine."

For a few days, anchored by overtime and bolstered by Elaine's affection, Hall gave every sign of having stabilized. But inside he was still unsettled, fighting to understand his own foolishness. Chris had shown him how he had misread events, but not why.

Presently, however, he became aware of a hollowness, a space left by friends lost and not replaced. *My own doing*, Hall thought. *One group left in Cross Creek—another scattered by college graduation. Too much work to keep the friendships alive. But all I have here are acquaintances and co-workers—except for Elaine, no real friends. Even Chris is more Elaine's friend than mine.*

Having fixed the blame on himself, Hall could do nothing else but to try to atone. He waited for a night when Elaine turned in early with a magazine. *Old cold trails*, he told himself as he opened the address book. *But how much can we have changed? Still—start small.*

After eight rings, the phone was answered. "Greider residence," said the voice. "This is Rick—Rick Hall, Mr. Greider," Hall said happily. "I've been trying to call you for a couple of weeks, but no one's been home."

"I've been quite busy cleaning out my things at the school. Who did you say you were again?"

"Richard Hall—chemistry, six years ago. Remember? Our lab group didn't get an experiment right until May, and you threw a party."

Greider didn't answer right away. "Young man, I'm sorry, but I don't remember you. I had a Kristen Hall, two years ago."

"That's my sister."

"Hmm. You say you attended Cross Creek six years ago?"

"That was my senior year. Then I went to MSU, in design."

"I'm: ily very sorry, but I don't seem to be able to remember you very clearly."

"I'm surprised; I came over to your house several times that year. Do you still have the little file cards on us?"

"No. I'm retiring this year, and I got rid of those. I do apologize, Mr. Hall, but there have been so many students over so many years..."

"I understand."

"Is there something I can do for you?"

"No, I just wanted to say hello."

It was a small failure, but substantial enough to blunt his enthusiasm. He sat quietly for a moment and flipped through the address book. There were names to which he could not even attach faces. *Perhaps it has been too long.*

The yearbooks were on the top shelf, and Hall had to drag a chair over to the bookcase and stand on it to reach them. They were well coated with dust; it had been some time since he had looked at them.

Hall permitted himself a few nasty thoughts at Greider's picture in the faculty section, and then turned to the pictures of the clubs. He looked for his face among the dozen below the label, "Art Club," but failed to find it. But that's right—he had missed three days with the flu, and most of the photos had been taken those days. He had thought he had been listed below it as "Missing from photo: R. Hall," but there was no such notation. He must have been wrong.

Turning to the seniors section, he paused several times to admire the young beauty of the girls he had dated, frozen by silver chemistry and printer's ink. Then he turned the page, and his own face smiled up from the page at him—cheerfully seventeen, the irrepressible lock of hair over his right ear sticking out.

Hall reached for his drink, resting on a coaster on the table beside him, but his hand never closed on it; he stared, incredulous, at the page, the muscles in his left hand standing out as he gripped the yearbook tightly.

The page had rippled, like water disturbed by a pebble, and when it had cleared, his picture was gone.

"Chris?"

"More trouble?"

"Can you help me find him again?"

"When did he leave?"

"No more than an hour ago."

"Why not call the police this time, Elaine? I don't like to have to say it, but we don't know whether he might be dangerous—if not to others, then to himself."

"No. He's my responsibility; I'm his wife."

"He's his own responsibility, and right now, he can't handle it."

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying that if we get him back, he needs more than a little extra attention this time. He needs more help than even you can give him."

"Professional help."

"The county mental health agency could decide what was best for him."

"What if he doesn't agree with them?"

"Your testimony in court would take care of that."

"I couldn't," Elaine said. "Not even now. I've got to love him back to health."

"That's my condition for going out after him—that you promise to do whatever's necessary for him to get better. And if you say no, I'm going to have to call the police myself."

"Oh, Chris . . ." She sounded tired. "Find him. I promise."

All Wood had to go on was what his friend had done the first time—head for Cross Creek. There were too many places Hall could have gone, and too few people searching. For the first time, Wood wished he had given in and bought a citizen's band radio. But he hadn't, and he could find little enthusiasm as he pulled onto the North-South Freeway.

Not expecting to find Hall anywhere but on the road or in Cross Creek, Wood nearly drove past the unlit car on the shoulder. But as he neared it, he caught a glimpse of the many bumper stickers adorning the back of the car, and recognized it as Hall's. He pulled onto the shoulder himself and stepped out of the car into a night well lit by a gibbous moon.

The car was empty, and Wood started up the grassy hill to the row of trees above. A short trail led through the clump of trees and to a clearing, in the middle of which Hall sat cross-legged. Wood approached him cautiously.

"I understand," Hall said clearly.

"Richard?" Wood said tentatively.

Hall turned his head. "Hello, Chris."

"Richard, I want you to come back with me."

"I was nearly ready to go, even if you hadn't come here."

"What are you doing?"

"I was listening."

"Listening?"

"Yes—to the world."

"Meditating."

"If you wish," Hall rose and brushed the bits of grass and dirt from his jeans. He seemed exceptionally calm.

"What did you hear?"

"Nothing—nothing from outside. From inside, a great deal."

"Are you feeling all right?"

"Perfectly. Are you ready to go?"

They walked down the slope, and Wood steered Hall away from his car. "Leave it here, we'll get it later. Please, ride with me."

Hall smiled understandingly. "You're afraid I might run off again."

"Yes," Wood admitted. "Shouldn't I be?"

"No. Not anymore. Of course I'll come with you, if that's what you prefer."

"I do."



"Can you explain it to me?"

Wood found Hall's almost beatific calm disturbing, but hesitated to say anything, for fear of setting Hall off once more. Finally he could not resist any longer. "You seem very different."

"It's just that I understand what's happening now."

"No." Hall twisted on the seat so that he was facing Wood. "How can you see from the outside what I can barely grasp from the inside? I wish I could make you understand. You and Elaine both. I want you to be able to accept it. You have the closest ties to me, so it should happen to you last."

"All right, Richard. You don't have to go on."

"I would if I knew what to say—that I'm slipping into the cracks between moments—that a mistake is being edited out of the cosmos—"

"Please stop. It's hard for me to listen to you talk like this."

"It'll be harder when I'm gone and you don't understand. There isn't much time left. They're very close to me now."

"We'll protect you," Wood said, near tears. "We'll get you all the help you need."

"I don't need any help." They were nearing the city; traffic was building up and structures outnumbered trees along the highway. "I'm not afraid, Chris. When I'm gone, everything will be in the place that was intended for it. At least that's how I feel. I've made my peace."

Wood took his eye off the road. "Dammit, stop!" he blurted. "You're sick but you're going to

get better. Just grab on to that thought, all right?"

"That car is stopping," Hall said in measured tones.

Wood glanced back at the road. "Idiot drivers," he said, braking and honking the horn. He looked in the side mirror, saw that the next lane was clear, and swung the car out of danger with a twitch on the steering wheel. The screech of tearing metal said that the car behind them had not done as well.

To his credit, Wood did not cause an accident himself when he saw that his passenger was gone.

The apartment door opened only moments after he knocked.

"I'm sorry, Elaine," Wood said. "I had him, and I lost him. I was distracted by traffic, and he must have taken that moment to jump out. I couldn't look for him very long, because he was on foot and I had a car back on the highway."

"Find him? Find who? What are you talking about?" she said, kissing him perfunctorily.

The kiss had the emotional impact of a heavyweight's best punch. "Richard, of course." When she showed no recognition or understanding, he added, "Your husband."

"You have a strange sense of humor sometimes," she said stiffly. The phone rang. "Come in and sit; I'll be ready in a few moments."

Wood stared as she disappeared into the kitchen, the folds of her long dress swishing with her precise steps. Then he looked at the rest of the room, seeking some clue that would relieve him of his confusion.

Almost immediately his eye fell on the picture that hung by the front closet. It had been a huge print of Richard and Elaine's wedding picture. Had been. Had been. Now there was a graduation photo of Elaine, and beside it in a second frame, her college diploma. Why had she changed it? No—how had she done it—the diploma she had never earned, because she had married Richard.

Wood felt beside him for a chair and fell back into it. He held his head in his hands, fighting the pain of accepting the unacceptable. Then he looked back at the photo and diploma, and was confused. It had been a fine graduation—a beautiful clear day, a wild party at night.

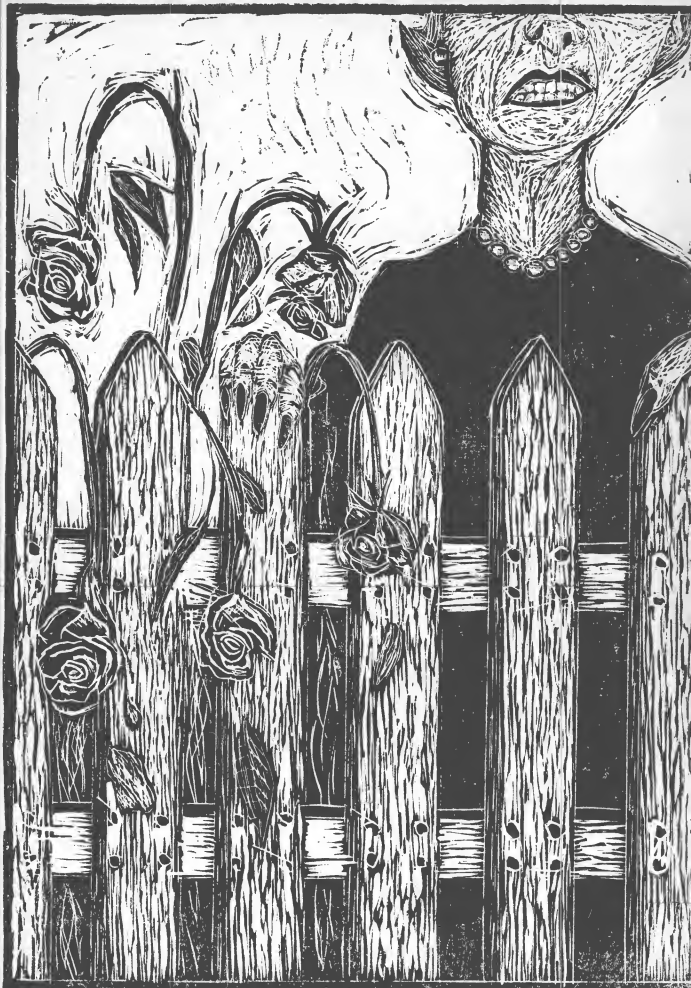
Elaine returned from the kitchen. "Now, will you please explain your joke about Richard? You make me feel like such a dummy sometimes."

Wood looked up at her and frowned. "Richard who?"

Elaine sighed. "I'm not going through that again. Do you have the tickets? I'm ready to go."

Wood patted his pocket absently, as though something had happened that he had missed. "Yes."

That night, they enjoyed each other as though it were the first time. **17**





Something Evil

by Barbara Owens

HER WORLD WAS DECAYING AROUND HER—
AND REVEALING A HORRIBLE TRUTH.

It began with tiny dark spots on her rose leaves. Her beautiful, carefully tended, proud hybrid teas. Elizabeth Stone got down on her knees to study them close up.

"Black spot." She shuddered in disbelief. "Oh, no. How can that be?"

After pinching off each offensive leaf with disgust, she sprayed the bushes thoroughly with fungicide, stalking through the early morning backyard in her old brown robe and curlers, not even caring if the neighbors saw. It bothered her greatly; she was still preoccupied with it when she arrived at the Village Dress Shop for work.

"Can you imagine?" she asked Ginny Clark after spilling out her story. "Me, of all people. As if I didn't have too many problems already." Ginny murmured something and moved away.

All day Elizabeth thought of her imperfect roses, and went immediately to the backyard after work, not even stopping to change her clothes. Close examination revealed no new spots; she sank back on her heels, relieved. Suddenly the day seemed brighter.

Elizabeth Stone took great pride in her backyard. It was a haven, the epitome of grace and beauty—rich reds, yellows and pinks in roses, blazing peonies and portulaca, pansies with pert saucy faces. She relished the cool shelter of trees—the sturdy oaks already clustered with new fruit—the soft mossy carpet where not one weed dared show its ugly head. A white lattice trellis arching under its blanket of coppery button roses contrasted brilliantly with the deep green honeysuckle cascade behind it; the honeysuckle's heavy scent dominated the air. It

was a work of art, unlike so many of the neighborhood's careless, haphazard lawns. Elizabeth surveyed it, pleased, and retired to the house to begin preparations for her solitary supper.

After eating, she sat down for a quiet hour with a pleasant book. Next door, Lisa Halloran turned on her stereo while she washed the dinner dishes.

Officer Baker took the call.

"This is Mrs. Howard Stone at 1412 South Grand."

"Yes, Mrs. Stone," Baker said, and the two men on duty with him looked up and grinned. Baker rolled his eyes.

"It's the Halloran girl next door again. Her music is so loud a person can't think. You'll have to do something about it right away."

"Have you asked her to turn it down?" Baker asked. His buddy, Turner snickered.

"I certainly tried. Her parents are away for the evening—they always are—and she won't answer the door or phone. What are you going to do?"

"Well, Mrs. Stone," Baker said carefully, "it's only a little past seven. Are you sure it's that bad? You know how kids—"

"What is your name?" the voice on the phone interrupted.

"Baker, ma'am."

"Well, Mr. Baker, I'm under the impression that police are paid to keep the peace. I'm not a young woman. I'm a widow, living alone, and I work hard—on my feet all day. It seems to me you people have a responsibility to protect my right of peace

Something Evil

and quiet after a long day. I—"

"All right, Mrs. Stone. Give me the Holloran address." Baker jotted it down. "I'll get right on it. Goodbye."

"You gonna call?" Donaldson asked after Baker hung up.

"Sure, why not? That Halloran kid and I are practically on a first-name basis by now." They all grinned. Baker picked up the phone.

Next day there were more spots on the rose leaves. Elizabeth picked them off, affronted, and spent a worrisome day at the dress shop, overcharging one customer for a gold lamé blouse and snapping when the lady brought it to her attention. Mrs. Ward, the owner, had to call Elizabeth into her little office and chide her gently for her attitude.

That evening she sat on her heels, dismayed, staring at a dozen or more velvety petals curled unbecomingly at their edges with an ugly brown rim. The dark edges were soft and moist to the touch; Elizabeth detected a faint unpleasant odor.

She snipped the wounded blossoms off, but next morning there were more, and, thoroughly upset by now, she placed them in a plastic bag and took them to the nursery on her lunch hour.

The plant consultant examined the leaves and petals carefully, shaking his head.

"Can't really tell," he said finally. "But it's not black spot. What do you use for feed and spray?" Elizabeth told him. "Okay, let me give you something else to try. And I'd change my mulch if I were you. Could be something in the mulch."

"I've never had mulch trouble in all the years I've been raising perfect roses," Elizabeth told him, but she took what he gave her and worked until dark applying it, also replacing every bush's mulch.

Every morning and evening for the next several days Elizabeth went over the roses inch by inch, neglecting the rest of her yard in her concentration on them, so it was with a shock that made her heart lurch when she leaned over her pansies one evening and saw their many swollen brown leaves. The odor they emitted was definitely rank.

Furious, she sprayed every living thing in her yard, working well into moonlight hours; when she finished, she was dirty and exhausted—she fell into bed without bathing, and slept a sleep shadowed by dark dreams she couldn't recall in details upon waking, but whose effect followed her into the backyard.

There were more bad leaves on the pansies. At the touch they felt pulpy; she removed them carefully, trying to ignore their smell, and when she saw the disfigured rose leaves and an irregular patch of brown in the grass at the base of the plum tree, she uttered a little cry.

"I want someone out here right away!" she demanded into the phone when the nursery answered.

"There's some terrible blight in my backyard. If I don't find out what it is, I'm going to lose all my beautiful things. You get someone out here right now!"

She called in ill at the dress shop, and when the specialist arrived Elizabeth followed him through her yard, sickened when she saw brown blisters on the trunk of her maple tree and ugly dark spots in the honeysuckle's thick growth. She was sure the neighbors were watching, witnessing her shame.

"I don't know what it is," the specialist finally admitted. "Never saw anything quite like it before. I'll have to take some samples to be tested. That's going to cost a little, Mrs. Stone."

"Of course it will," Elizabeth replied bitterly. "Everyone takes advantage of women alone. Well, my husband certainly didn't leave me well fixed, but I'll pay what I consider a reasonable amount. Are you sure it couldn't be something your nursery sold me—something poisoning my plants?"

"Oh no, ma'am, that's the one thing I can guarantee it isn't. Anything we sold you is tested and perfectly safe."

After he was gone, carrying his bags of specimens, Elizabeth wandered through the house, stopping occasionally at a window to stare out at her blemished yard. Late in the afternoon she napped, and when she went out again just before dusk she stepped in a new patch of brown at the edge of the poppy bed. It was mushy, sinking slightly under her feet. John Jordan, setting up his sprinklers in the yard behind hers, heard her little scream.

Officer Donaldson took the call.

"Make him turn it off!" a woman's voice shrieked. "He's killing them—killing them! Do something—hurry!"

"Your name and address please," Donaldson said, shooting upright in his chair. "Stay calm, ma'am. Who's in danger and where are you?"

"Stone!" the voice gasped. "Mrs. Howard Stone—1412 South Grand." It took a beat for the name to register; when it did, Donaldson relaxed.

"What seems to be the problem, Mrs. Stone?"

"It's him—that Jordan man. His sprinklers—the water's coming over my fence—killing my yard. Come out and arrest him right away!"

Donaldson sighed. "Have you asked the gentleman to lower the sprinklers, ma'am?"

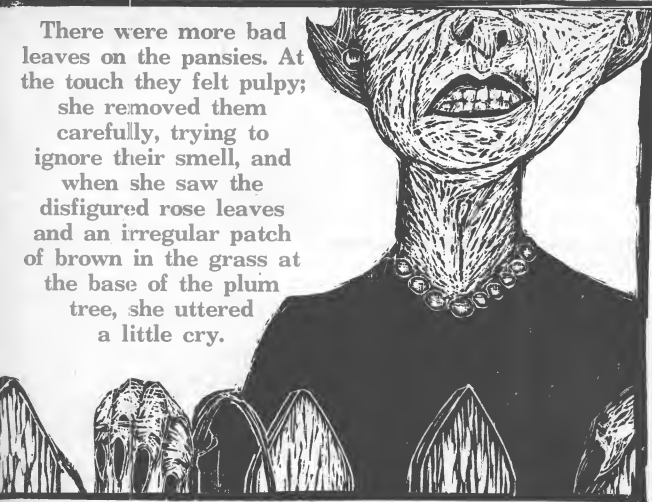
"Many times—oh, many many times. He won't—he just swears at me. You must do something—that's your job!"

"Okay, Mrs. Stone," Donaldson said patiently. "We're a little short-handed at the moment, but we'll get someone out there as soon as possible. It's all taken care of, you can count on us." He hung up.

"Boyoboy," was the patrol car's response. "Again?"

"Take your time," Donaldson said. "By the time you get there the poor guy should be done."

There were more bad leaves on the pansies. At the touch they felt pulpy; she removed them carefully, trying to ignore their smell, and when she saw the disfigured rose leaves and an irregular patch of brown in the grass at the base of the plum tree, she uttered a little cry.



Elizabeth waited almost a week for the results of her plants' analysis. The days were long. She was not doing well at the dress shop; in her little office Mrs. Ward admonished her again, this time not so gently.

The call finally came. "We haven't got an answer for you," the matter-of-fact voice said. "We just don't know what it is. No known disease or pest—no poison of any kind."

"What—what—" Elizabeth began, irate, but the specialist cut her off.

"We're going to have the state agricultural labs give a look. Only thing is, that's going to take a while. Is it spreading?"

"Spreading!" She didn't care that she was shouting into the phone. "Half my backyard is all yellow-brown—it's sickening! Nothing falls off or dies, it just—swells up and stays there!" She swallowed nausea. "The smell is—I can't describe it! What are you going to do?"

"We'll get back to you just as soon as we can, Mrs. Stone," the expert said and hung up.

Elizabeth had started leaving the drapes drawn on the back side of the house. She parted one now, just a crack, and peeped out. Suddenly cold, she shivered—the mushy brown spots in the grass were growing together. Her plum tree was almost entirely affected, its promising new fruits shiny, swollen almost to bursting, its leaves extended, fat. Everything looked rubbery, bloated, her lovely rose bushes totally tumefied and brown. Elizabeth hurried to the phone.

Her son's wife, Carol, answered. There was a short pause at the other end after Elizabeth announced herself.

"Well, Mother Stone," Carol said finally. "What a nice surprise."

"We don't have to pretend to be friends," Elizabeth said shortly. "Let me speak with Roger, please."

"He isn't here just now."

"And when do you expect him?"

Carol paused again. "I really can't say."

"For heaven's sake, Carol, I have a right to speak to my son."

"I don't know about your rights," Carol said quickly, "but Roger isn't here and I don't know where he is. He left me several weeks ago."

Elizabeth caught her breath. "And why wasn't I informed?"

"Because," Carol said with great weariness in her voice, "I didn't want you taking charge."

"Taking charge?"

"I want to be left alone just now. Do you understand?"

"Well, certainly I'm not one to interfere," Elizabeth said proudly. "I must say, though, I'm not surprised."

"No, I'm sure you aren't."

"You have no idea where I can reach him?"

"Not a notion, Mother Stone, and frankly I don't care. You did a good job on him. He's totally—inflexible, just like you. And I'm being kind."

Elizabeth ignored that. "I'd like Francine's

Elizabeth's heart trembled. The last spot of green outside her patio door was gone—puffy blades of yellow-brown grass reached toward her through the glass.

phone number, please."

"I don't have it."

"Of course you do. I have her old one, but I know she had it changed."

"Do you know why? She doesn't want to talk to you."

"Why don't you let her tell me that herself?" Elizabeth allowed a quaver to creep into her voice. "Please, Carol, it's important. I'm begging. I promise I won't bother you again." She waited through the long thoughtful pause.

"Oh, I don't care," Carol said finally. "Anything to be let alone. She lives out-of-state now, did you know that? I'll give you her number, but not her address. Do you have a pencil?"

"Of course I do," Elizabeth said, and wrote it down. "I always thought you quite disagreeable, Carol." She hung up, priding herself that she hadn't even inquired about the children.

Francine's number rang and rang, but no one answered.

Next morning Susan Halloran, Lisa's mother, caught her on the front walk.

"Elizabeth, I have to speak to you about the stench coming from your backyard."

"Mind your own business," Elizabeth said. "There's nothing wrong with my backyard."

Susan flushed. "Elizabeth, we've tried to be reasonable living next door to you. Not that you haven't made our lives hell—"

"I don't have to listen to this," Elizabeth walked away.

"All right, I'm going to call the health department," Susan called after her. "I'm sorry, but no one can talk to you. I don't have any choice." Elizabeth walked faster, head high, cheeks burning.

"I think my neighbors are trying to poison me," she confided to Ginny Clark at the dress shop. "I don't know just how much more I can bear."

That evening Francine's number still didn't answer.

Officer Turner took the call.

"This is Mrs. Howard Stone, 1412 South Grand Street. My neighbors, the Hallorans, are trying to harm me. I have proof. I demand an investigation and police protection right away."

"Okay, Mrs. Stone," Turner said, and winked across the desk at Baker. "You got it. We'll keep you

under surveillance. You won't see us, but we'll be there."

"My God," the health department official said. "What happened here?"

Elizabeth stood on the one small patch of green, just outside her patio door; tears stung her eyes.

"I'm sure I don't know," she answered stiffly. "Ask my neighbors. They're responsible. I don't know why, but they all hate me. Ask them what they did to my beautiful yard."

They surveyed a surreal landscape: from the house's back wall to the four corners of the fence every tree, shrub and flower stood engorged, yellow-brown. Fat bloated leaves and branches leaned over them; the swollen lath trellis and its congested cover crouched like some tortured caterpillar close by. Thousands of tiny hairline seams oozed a thick dark sap onto the protuberant, rubbery grass below—it made an audible plop upon landing, and the odor it produced sent the official choking and backing away. Nothing moved. The health official turned his head slowly and stared at Elizabeth with startled eyes.

"My God, lady," he whispered, "I don't know how to handle this. I'll have to take it up with my superior." She watched him almost running down the driveway.

At dusk Elizabeth peered once more into the lifeless yard. Her heart trembled. The last spot of green outside her patio door was gone—puffy blades of yellow-brown grass reached toward her through the glass.

Francine finally answered her phone.

"Oh, my God!" she said when she heard Elizabeth's voice.

"Don't—please don't hang up, Francine!" Elizabeth pleaded. "Just give me a minute, please don't hang up!"

"How did you get my number?" Her daughter's voice was hard. "How dare you—"

"Please, Francine, please listen!" Astonished, she discovered she was crying. "Mama needs your help."

There was a short startled laugh. "You—what?"

"Don't hang up! Listen! There's—I'm in trouble. I need your help. Something is—I don't understand it—I'm afraid, Francine. I don't have anyone left but you—you have to help me, you have to!" She stopped, breathless, hands trembling so she could hardly hold the phone. "Francine!"

"What're you trying to pull now, Mama?"

"Pull? Pull! Don't you understand what I'm saying, you silly—I'm in danger of some kind! I'm afraid! I know we've had our differences, but that's past. We'll be good friends now, will you help me, please?"

The silence was excruciating. Elizabeth was



anting, pressed into the wall, eyes tight shut with the power of her concentration.

"Are you hurt?" Francine asked finally. "Sick? What kind of danger are you in?"

"I don't know!" Elizabeth moaned. "I—can't explain. My backyard is—there's something growing out there—getting bigger—"

"Your backyard?"

"I told you I couldn't explain! I want to come see you—stay a little while. We'll have a nice visit and make up. Can I come see you, please, Francine?"

"No."

"Wait, let me—"

"No!" Strength was returning to her daughter's voice, the initial shock wearing away. "I don't want to see you Mama. Not now—not ever, can't you get that through your head?"

"You have to! You owe me—"

"I don't owe you anything! You disowned me, Mama, literally locked me out of your house and life. I came home and found everything I owned sitting in the yard, remember? I was eighteen—eighteen! Do you know how many years it's taken me to get over living with you, Mama? Owe you? That's the best I've had all day."

Elizabeth pounded her fist against the wall. "Francine, I'm your mother!"

"You're evil. You poison everything you touch. Me—Roger—Daddy. You know why I think Daddy died so young? It was the only way he could get away from you—you and your nasty little ways. I'm not sorry for you—I don't care what your problem is. I don't want anything to do with you, and I'm glad—glad if you're in trouble. I've prayed all your life that you would catch up with you someday, Mama—actu-

ally prayed. Whatever it is, it'll be what you deserve."

"Let me come, Francine—"

"I'm getting my number changed again tomorrow. You'd better not try contacting me again."

"Francine—"

"Goodbye, Mama."

"WHERE ARE YOU, FRANCINE?"

She pounded and pounded on the wall, then let the dead phone lie where it fell. As she stumbled past the patio doors, she saw a small brown spot in the soft beige of her rug.

The real estate agent took one look at the backyard and badly spotted carpets. His look was wide and strange.

"I can't sell the place looking like this, Mrs. Stone. I'm sorry, but no one would buy."

"What am I going to do?"

"Move. Get an apartment. The whole backyard will have to be dug up and replanted before I can do a thing."

"I can't—afford to move. I have no money—my late husband—penniless—"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Stone."

That night Elizabeth slept badly. The whole house reeked of mold and decay—when she rose the next morning her bedroom curtains were spotted with brownish yellow blisters, the drain in the bathroom sink pushed up a dark, foul spongy mass. Terrified, she ran to the phone and dialed the Hallorans, the Jordans, the old couple living across the street. No one answered. While she stood, frozen, a brownish blotch suddenly took shape on the phone.

Officer Baker took the call.

"Help! Help me!" a female voice gasped into his ear.

"Name and address, please," Baker said quickly. "We'll get help there immediately."

"Stone! 1412 South Grand! Help me!"

Baker leaned back in his chair. "Yes, Mrs. Stone?"

"You have to—it's coming—oh, my God—I can't—" The voice faded; there was silence. Baker pressed the phone against his ear.

"Mrs. Stone?" Nothing. "Mrs. Stone, don't play games with me." Still nothing. He looked across at Turner and Donaldson. "Well, what do you think?"

Turner shrugged. "I think we should just forget that call came in."

"Yeah," Donaldson agreed softly.

Baker looked at the receiver he held in his hand. "I think you're right," he said. "I'm in no mood for that kind of nut tonight. Why don't one of you guys bring me some coffee?"

Officer Baker hung up the phone. **EW**



THE REALITY THEY'D SHARED
SEEMED JUST
ANOTHER ILLUSION IN . . .

The Dreamhouse

by Cezarija Abartis

"Lorna, dear, can't you keep the kid from caterwauling?"

"It's ninety-five degrees, Douglas, and we've been in this car all day, Douglas. If you're so smart, you keep her from crying."

He sighed. He sighed again. Lately, he was doing that a lot. He turned up the radio so they wouldn't have to talk. Lorna was not the pretty coed he married five years ago: her figure had gone puffy, her sandy hair looked wispy, and that shining face was now grim and often pinched in anger. Not much was left of their grand passion. What was left was cold, wary, and self-interested.

The newsman on the radio announced that formal negotiations between the state and the public employees' union had broken off. At issue was the health care package for families. No negotiation sessions were scheduled over the weekend.

"What was that?" Lorna asked.

"The formal negotiations between the union and the state have broken off."

"What does that mean?"

"Quit that dumb-blond routine, Lorna."

"Well, Mr. Professor, Mr. College Teacher, Mr. Son of a Bitch, predict the future, why don't you. Will the teachers go on strike too? Will we get home tonight?"

"I'm not the one who's afraid of flying."

"Big man. Too bad you can't afford plane tickets." She wiped the sweat from her forehead with the back of her hand and shushed the baby, kissing her. "It'll be okay, Cassandra. There now, Mommy loves you." In a voice high and quavery, she proceeded to sing "Rock-a-bye Baby." She got some of the words wrong. But the baby dozed off anyway.

Lorna turned to him, her eyes watery and lined in red. "Douglas, what's the matter with us? What's wrong with me?"

"Heartburn? Something you had for lunch?"

"I'm glad life is funny for Maggotface." She looked at him sideways, measuring if she'd won that bout.

Well, he wouldn't give her satisfaction. He

wouldn't be wounded. "I wish I had your gift for words, Lorna dear."

The newsman announced a tornado alert in the counties of Livingston, Grundy, and Kankakee. There might be a storm: off to the southwest, the twilight was falling into a dark and eerie silver pattern. They could use a rainstorm after all the dry weather they had driven through.

Lorna's pink dress with the blue forget-me-nots showed the perspiration stains under the sleeves and in back as she hunched over, giving the baby her bottle of lukewarm formula. He remembered Lorna's bitterness over this dress that was her sister's hand-me-down, her *younger* sister's hand-me-down. And her sulky silence when that sister invited them to her house and showed off her brand-new dining room suite. You'd think Lorna was deprived of her constitutional rights by having to live in a rented house. "It's so shabby," she had said accusingly.

They *would* pick the hottest week of the year to visit her mother. Independence Day. He thought that was ironic. No freedom from mistakes. Just one mistake after another, beginning with the marriage and the job and the baby. When they had moved to Assumptionville, it looked like the ideal place for a young couple with its small-town atmosphere, arching oak trees, and parks with swings and latticework gazebos. The most recent crime was a break-in at his neighbor's house across the street, during which the burglars took an old army blanket and a frozen turkey.

But Assumptionville was not, for them, a happy place.

As he looked at the slowly darkening woods along the roadside, he thought it strange that they appeared lush, appeared not to have suffered from the drought. There were no patches of burned vegetation like those along the interstate highways.

When they left the interstate for the county road, they knew it would be slower, but they expected it to be cooler and less hectic. The scenery changed from rolling, tamed land in strips and squares of browned crops to wilder areas and woods,



and they had not seen a car or a tractor for the last hour, but it was not cooler and it was not less hectic between them. Even the steering wheel was hot.

The newsman announced that the tornado watch had become a tornado warning, as one was sighted on I-57. The radio announcer went through the safety rules again about what to do when a tornado is sighted.

"Are we in any danger, Douglas?"

"Not from a tornado." He looked at the layers of hot color settling down in the west and the powdery gray to the north. "We're not going in that direction."

"What's that over there?" She pointed to a bump on the far horizon where the trees parted. "Aren't we any closer to Chicago? Is that a farmhouse? Maybe they can tell us."

"We're not lost, Lorna."

"Have it your way. Humor me, and let me stop there." The baby let out a piercing yell. Lorna took a deep breath, melodramatically. "My guts are twisting anyhow, and I'd like some cold milk."

"You could have filled the thermos up at the diner."

The baby started howling again so Lorna didn't have a chance to reply. The baby was supposed to save the marriage, to make her happy, but where two might almost be able to live as cheaply as one, three certainly could not.

"I think Cassandra has a temperature. Here, feel her forehead."

He patted the baby's head. "I can't tell. I'm no thermometer."

"She's burning up. It was your bright idea to leave the interstate. If we'd stayed on the highway..."

"Look, Lorna, the baby's all right. Don't get yourself hysterical about it. It's your imagination overdrive again."

"She has a fever, I tell you." Lorna began to coo over the baby, as if this were some small sick animal.

"You're going to make her into a hypochondriac too."

They had risen early at the motel so they could drive all day, get home before nightfall and not have to pay for another night on the road. But there wasn't a motel around here, and he had to admit they were lost. The baby whimpered and cried louder and louder. Maybe she was sick and it wasn't just Lorna's way of getting attention. Lightning pierced through the gathering clouds like shooting needles. The thunderheads surrounding them frightened him: the night and soon the rain would make it harder to find their way home. A screechy wife, a sick kid, and now a thunderstorm.

"I'm going to have to stop and ask for directions, Lorna. I think we're lost."

**A great black cloud
had formed overhead,
promising a violent storm.
Maybe this house could
offer protection from
the worst of it and then
they could drive on.**

She smiled. She seemed happy at their bad luck. "I told you so."

He clenched the steering wheel. "The only place to ask is up ahead at that farmhouse."

The singer on the radio complained of love sent out and not returned, of faith not kept and dreams destroyed, of rivals, broken hearts, and discord. The advertising jingle was about breath mints and love.

They were wrong about discord. It issued and continued not out of strangeness, but out of familiarity, out of comfortableness and predictability. He and Lorna, for example. They would always and forever fight about money and her mother and his job. It was a road signposted, well-traveled, even rutted. The jolts were predictable and safe, the pain tolerable.

The radio announcer subsided into static.

The wind was rising and whipping through the bushes as they pulled into the driveway alongside the farmhouse. Close up it was quite impressive: a three-story, red frame house with a graceful tower, a porch around the first floor, a circular front window, smaller stained glass windows on each side. An impossible house in the middle of the prairie. A refuge.

"What a beautiful house," she said. "That's the house I've always wanted. It's like a house in Longwell when I was a little girl. It burned down."

"There must've been a lot of houses built to that plan. It reminds me of something too."

"We should both go in and ask for directions," she said with a smile smearing her face. "Maybe one of us will get it right." She slammed the car door shut.

Here the twilight was green and a great black cloud had formed overhead, promising a violent storm. Maybe this house could offer protection from the worst of it and then they could drive on.

The lawn in front of the house was thick and neatly clipped.

"That's pretty as a picture," she said.

On the mailbox was stamped not the name of the family but of the house—Harmony House. At a conference last year he had presented a paper on the Owenite congregation in New Harmony: "A Utopian Community in Its Sociological and Psychological Manifestations." It was well received. He hadn't known there was an Owenite settlement in Illinois. No, of course not. There couldn't have been. This was just a beautiful coincidence.

The windows were open, and lace curtains fluttered out.

"How romantic," Lorna said. "We'd be all right if we had a house like this."

"And money," he said. It would be easy to be a scholar if you had money and the right wife.

The squirming baby was screaming, screaming madly, arms flailing and feet kicking as if she were in pain or in terror.

They didn't have to wait long after ringing the doorbell. The woman who came to the door was beautiful, a few years younger than Lorna. She wore a long red dress. The baby stopped wailing.

"Oh, you're here after all. Just a little late. Come in," the beautiful lady said. "But I didn't know you were bringing the baby. I've been waiting for you." Her eyes were iridescent green.

"You must think we're someone else. We were just passing by."

"Nonsense, you're staying. There are glasses of lemonade and milk in the parlor." The telephone rang. "Excuse me a minute. Make yourselves comfortable." She waved them inside.

They sat down on the couch and helped themselves to the cold drinks. Lorna gawked and gasped and admired. She fingered the plush upholstery and laid her hand along the polished wood of the table in front of them. Douglas picked up the book that was beside the lamp. It seemed to be about architecture.

"Look at those china cupboards!" she said, leaning forward. "I want to get a closer look at that dining room. Watch Cassandra for a sec. I think she's okay now. Maybe it was just being in that hot car all day." She walked into the next room.

He leafed through the book, which turned out to be a novel: "Board by board and nail by nail they were building their dream house, their hellhouse, their prison." He could hear Lorna shuffling around her loose sandals in the next room.

"Come here a minute," she shrieked. "You should see this dining room."

He closed the book and clamped his lips. "I'm reading."

She sounded as if she were dragging something across the floor, something heavy and metallic. When she stopped. "I can't hear you, Douglas. Where are you?" She was irritated.

"I'm in the next room," he answered, controlling the anger in his voice.

"Where are you?"

"I'm right next door," he answered. The room was growing darker by the minute, as if the night were seeping in. He could hear the wind lashing the trees outside. The framed photograph next to the lamp was a wedding picture of the lady who let them in.

They were a handsome couple. Her eyes were bright, her face radiant, as if glowing from an inner fire. She was holding out some sort of fruit, an apple perhaps. Her husband was smiling.



"I'm scared. Where are you?" Lorna's voice was constricted with panic.

"I'm coming," he said, rising from the couch and letting the book slip from his lap. There was such an edge in Lorna's voice. He looked at the baby lying on her blanket, finally quiet now. She certainly did not feel feverish and was sleeping the angel sleep of babies. He walked into the next room, but it wasn't set up as a dining room. Walnut bookcases lined the wall from floor to ceiling; there was a library table in the middle of the room, a couple of armchairs, one hard chair by the window. But no Lorna.

The shelves were filled with books—leather-bound books, rare books, out-of-print books. His eyes took in the titles: O'Connor's *Urban Planning and Community*, Fowles's *Design in Civilization*, Gide and Dinesen's *Anatomy of Cities*. Excellent! Excellent! He would give anything to be allowed to use this library. Here he could write that great book he was capable of writing.

At the window he saw that darkness was absolute, only occasionally and abruptly ripped by lightning. The wind was whistling, growing louder in the trees, and growling like a zoo full of animals. He felt secure. "It's a good thing we came in here," he called out to Lorna. "There might be a tornado. This house has a basement."

"Where are you? Why don't you answer me? I can't hear you." Her clumsy steps moved upstairs.

"I'm coming," he said. The beautiful lady had left a notebook open on the library table. Beside it was a fountain pen where she had left off writing: "In Dante's *Inferno*, the erring lovers are blown about by invisible winds. For those who lack harmony and desire, who are liberated from love, what nice punishment, what slow reward? They do not hear, they do not see; they know each other so well. A special place for those who once loved."

"Douglas, you never listen to me." The hoarse panic had changed to whine.

He knew he could ignore it now. There was no imminent danger. She was being her usual spoiled self, unhappy with his small salary and their small house, nagging at him when he was at home and resentful when he left for conferences. "Just wait a minute," he said.

The rush and gasp and sigh of the wind became louder and darker and deeper until a hot, oppressive blackness sat outside each door and window.

He stepped back toward the parlor and the baby and found himself in a hall with an elaborately carved staircase, the newel post surmounted by a dragon's head, narrowing down into a pillar which ended in a ball and claw. With his fingertips he explored the lifelike carving of the scales, the eyes, and the teeth.

Well, this wasn't the parlor. He must have got-

His peripheral vision
saw something that his brain
did not. A movement.

A wavering.
Something.
A voice in a whirlwind.

ten turned around. He went back through the door, his breathing shallow.

Here was that dining room that Lorna exclaimed about. It was pretty enough, he thought, trying to concentrate. He told himself to be calm.

He crossed to the opposite door and found not the library but the hall, with the dragon staring down at him, the stairs leading up. He held his breath, unable to exhale or inhale or see or hear.

His breath let go. For a second he stopped, trying to remember something, he didn't know what. And then the baby receded from his consciousness.

His peripheral vision saw something that his brain did not. A movement. A wavering. Something. A voice in a whirlwind. But it was not Lorna's voice. Or if it was, he couldn't see her. She wasn't wheeling at him anymore. It was a whirring sound like a thousand mechanical clocks, like the end of time, he thought. He almost called for Lorna but was glad of the momentary peace. He felt light.

He remembered a childhood toy he had yearned for and been given. It was in a cellophane bag that he put over his head. It was smothering him, but his father had come into the room to kiss him goodnight and had saved him.

A fugitive fear overtook him. It was that memory of childhood terror in part, and of something else, he didn't know what. And why should he fear that now? It was frightening that he should fear it now.

He looked up the stairway. He held the banister tightly as he walked upstairs. There was a smell of burning, of lightning that seemed to flow under him as he ascended. Vertigo spun inside his head and then outside. For him, the wind never stopped.

The beautiful lady emerged from the storm cellar with Cassandra in her arms. She rocked the baby back and forth and spoke gently to her, "My poor orphan, what shall I do with you?" She kissed her. "You wonder where they are? Here in this house, whirling around in their dreams. Dissolved into the walls, they will never again have to speak to each other." She stroked her forehead. "For now I'll take you to the hospital, another victim of the tornado, they'll say. But you will come back, won't you, when you're older. I'll have a special treat for you, something you need, something you desire forever. I'll build you a dreamhouse, too." 17

Garage Sale

by Janet Fox



Collage by Morry Blake

THE SERPENTINE LADY SOLD SECOND-HAND CLOTHES,
OLD FURNITURE—AND SOMETHING FAR MORE PERMANENT.

They were driving around the city on a steamy late-summer afternoon, two secretaries beating the heat of their inner-city alkup by cruising through suburbia. Here lawns lay crisp and green under a mist from sprinkler systems, the houses hermetically sealed to hold in the coolness leached by air conditioners. Stella clacked as she drove, but only because she was addicted to plastic racelets. She also liked to dye her hair different colors—though mercifully just one color at a time.

Jen was to Stella as the wren is to the cardinal, not noticeable beside the more flamboyant display, yet having a quiet style all her own.

"They got it made, huh?" said Stella. "Not having to bust their buns in a dumb office every day.

House, hubby, and kids—the American dream, right?"

"I think you made a wrong turn."

"Where?"

"Back there. Some of these residential streets end in a cul-de-sac, and—"

"A cool de what?"

Jen subsided since it was too late to get Stella going in the right direction. Shadows of low-hanging foliage immersed the car, but only served to intensify the heat. The neat cookie-cutter ranches had given way to older residences in a variety of styles, most of them pretentious, spread more widely apart and set well back from the street.

"Or how about these? Woo-eee!"

Garage Sale

As they passed a neo-Victorian horror, rife with gingerbread and flanked about with fountains and marble statues, both of them saw at once the hand-lettered sign poked into the funeral-grass lawn:

GARAGE SALE TODAY ONLY

"Do you believe that?" giggled Stella, putting on the brakes so suddenly that Jen had to steady herself with a hand on the dash.

"What do you suppose they're selling, the Crown Jewels?" asked Jen.

"As long as it's a bargain," said Stella, her bracelets rattling as she climbed out of the car.

The house awed Jen a little as she walked toward it. Stella giggled and pointed as she passed a marble cupid relieving himself into an ornamental pool.

"I know you love these sales," said Jen, "but every time I go to one, I get talked into buying some worthless junk."

"Never can tell. Today may be your day to find a treasure."

Jen looked furtively at the cupolas and the stained glass windows. "A place like this—it could just be some kind of joke."

Stella gestured toward a cardboard sign tacked to the porch railing: **GARAGE SALE IN BACK**, with a scarlet arrow pointing the way.

There was a garage in back, though the builders had evidently not felt called upon to give it the ornateness they'd showered upon the house itself. Though the place was large inside, almost barnlike, they saw to their wonder that it was stacked wall to wall with a jumble of artifacts, furniture of all kinds and periods, clothing of several different eras, tools, household gadgets, and things that defied description.

"I think I just died and went to heaven," said Stella. She began to root contentedly about among the merchandise.

Jen nodded a greeting to the woman who seemed to be in charge of the sale. She sat behind a card table on a tattered chaise longue of violet brocade, most of her attention claimed by a cheap paperback romance. There was something odd about her, something Jen couldn't quite put her finger on, though certainly she might have been any housewife in faded jeans and a checkered shirt rolled to the elbows, a bandanna covering her head, the fat coils of hair rollers distending it.

"There's something funny about this place," she told Stella, who ignored her, rummaging through a trunk of musty-smelling garments, a moth-eaten feather boa draped about her shoulders. "Something funny," she muttered to herself, and began to move desultorily around the place, seeing an enormous moose head, the bottom half of a store-window mannikin and the photographs of generals Grant and Lee framed in what looked like the seat of a privy.

**Jen opened her mouth
to scream at Stella,
but as she looked,
by some trick of vision,
her friend seemed small
and far away,
waltzing dreamily . . .**

"What an incredible collection of junk!" she said under her breath. Yet despite her incredulity, she began to be carried away by the sheer volume. What had Stella been saying about finding treasure?

She was poking about in a dim corner when she moved aside a Chinese silk screen patterned with tigers. As she did, she drew in her breath and hastily began to apologize. A man sat before her in a threadbare recliner, seemingly staring out at her, though with the reflection on his glasses she couldn't quite be sure. Her apology trailed off as she realized he wasn't moving.

"My God! Stella, he's dead! Stel—"

As she turned to run, she collided with someone she at first thought was her friend. It was the woman in charge of the sale; she smiled a small, secretive smile that made her angular, high-cheekboned face seem anything but ordinary, and she gripped Jen's arms to keep her from falling.

Jen opened her mouth to scream to Stella, but as she looked, by some trick of vision, her friend seemed small and far away, waltzing dreamily, a gown of blue voile held up before her.

"She can't hear you—not from here," said the woman calmly. Released from her grasp, Jen stood unsteadily before the strangely immobile man in the chair.

"Here? Where's here?"

"A juncture. A pivotal moment outside of time. Do you like him?" The woman removed the man's glasses with a proprietary gesture and cleaned them on the tail of her shirt. Jen saw that he had gentle myopic blue eyes.

"Do I like him?"

"I won't pretend he's like new. The hair's thinning on top, and he could lose a bit down here." She patted the obvious paunch beneath his white shirt. "But in many ways he was a good husband."

"He's your— No, you couldn't be selling—"

"Well, a person gets tired of things sometimes before they're quite worn out. You know how it is." A tiny dark questing head peeped from beneath the bandanna and slowly oozed its length down the woman's face: a snake as big around as a pencil with a minuscule tongue that darted out to taste the woman's cheek. Almost before the image registered, certainly before it was believed, the woman had swept it back under the bandanna with a casual gesture. Up close Jen could see the bulges beneath the cloth move, coiling and sliding.

"I guess so," said Jen, licking her lips and looking back toward the man in the chair. "He looks nice, but—" She hadn't noticed before, but there was

price written in grease pencil on his forehead. \$10. But why does he just sit there like that?"

"Since it's getting late," said the woman, lowering her voice conspiratorially, "and no one else has been interested, I'll let him go for half price."

"Is he dead or—"

"He's fully functional. I'll reanimate him when the time comes."

"Are you telling me you're some kind of ... witch?"

"That's just a word, but I guess it'll do."

"They used to catch witches and burn them!"

The woman laughed, shaking her head until a dark patterned tail slipped out onto her forehead and quickly slithered back under cover. "Not real witches, they didn't," she said.

"You must be crazy, and—" Jen looked desperately for Stella, but she was no longer there. A yellow plastic bracelet lay on the floor in a prosaic patch of sunlight.

"Don't expect corroboration from your friend. He was never here. Neither were you, if I don't make the sale."

"What if you do? Make the sale."

The woman smiled. "Yeah, I kind of thought you were interested. Well, you'll have a husband, that's all. Say you met him right after you finished business school."

"That's what I'll think?"

"That's what will have happened," said the woman, looking at her fingernails. They were very

long fingernails, polished black, and the tips curved inward.

"Do we have ... children?"

"For five dollars?"

Jen's fingers moved numbly, opening the catch of her purse. She didn't think she could just leave him there like that, staring into space and sitting in that ratty recliner for all eternity. And then, she hadn't had much luck getting a husband the usual way, so ...

As she handed over the bill, the woman's eyes caught hers, cool amber eyes, steady-burning as lamps, the pupils a horizontal bar of darkness. Her whisper, grown low and sinister, hung in the air. "Tell you what, I'll even throw in the chair."

"Just look at me, Ben. Sometimes I think you're *glued* in that goddamned chair!"

Ben blinked up at her, his blue eyes so innocent, so vulnerable behind their panes of glass that she felt she could gladly throttle him. It was so predictable, so irritating. Screwing up his face with concentration, he did something to the tv's remote control, and the volume of the football game rose imperceptibly. "Really, Jen, I don't suppose you could come up with this overpowering desire to go out on any night except Monday. A man works hard; he deserves a chance to sit down once in a while." He twitched like a rabbit. "So what's for supper?"

"Oh, God!" A wisp of smoke curled through the kitchen door, and Jen ran to remove the smoking pan from the stove. She turned the water on it, half choking on the smell. Then she stood at the sink looking at the charred and drowned remains. "If I had it all to do over again," she said quietly, drawing a hand across her face and leaving a black smear. She sighed inaudibly, thinking that no one ever had a chance to do it over, no one.

Never.

She busied herself in the kitchen for a few minutes, then returned to the living room, automatically picking up newspapers from the floor and an empty beer can that had left a ring on the coffee table.

"I burned the chops, so I put in a couple of tv dinners. I figured you'd like that, you like the damn tv so much anyway." For a moment she thought he hadn't heard her; he sat there immobile, like a graven idol, blue images from the screen flickering on his glasses.

At last he grunted. "That's just great," he said. "A man works hard all day and comes home to tv dinners. Some wife I found for myself."

"Listen," she said, interposing herself between him and the set. "You're not that big a bargain yourself, mister." For some reason even she could not fathom, she found that vastly amusing, and repeated it. "No bargain," she said, and laughed until tears came to her eyes. 17



THE TWILIGHT ZONE

The Final Season

by Marc Scott Zicree

On September 27, 1963, the first episode of *Twilight Zone's* fifth season, "In Praise of Pip," was aired. With it, the series returned from an hour to a half-hour form. The thirty-six episodes this year would prove a mixed bag. On some subjects, such as immortality and ventriloquists' dummies, they merely rehased material that had been effectively explored on the show in years previous. But on other subjects the series was daringly innovative and surprising. A grandfather clock, a stopwatch, a doll, a ring, an automobile, grotesque masks, a tv set and a telephone all exhibited supernatural traits. Locations ranged from the Little Big Horn to the Garden of Eden, from the distant past to the twenty-first century. *Twilight Zone* alumni such as Lee Marvin, Ed Wynn, Jack Klugman and William Shatner returned to star in new episodes. Newcomers to the series included Mickey Rooney, Telly Savalas, James Coburn, Neville Brand, George Takei and Oscar-nominee Mary Badham, fresh from her role as Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Directors new to *Twilight Zone* included Richard Donner (*Superman*, *The Omen*), Jacques Tourneur (*Cat People*, *Curse of the Demon*), Joseph M. Newman (*This Island Earth*) and Ida Lupino.

This was the season that nineteen-year-old Virginia Trimble, a UCLA astrophysics major, toured the country as "Miss *Twilight Zone*" in order to promote the show. It was the season of "In Praise of Pip," which contains what is very likely the first Vietnam War casualty in any American dramatic television program ("There isn't even supposed to be a war there," laments Jack Klugman as bookie Max Phillips). It was also the first season to package as a *Twilight Zone* episode a film produced by another company—a French-made adaptation of Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"—done as a cost-cutting

measure to get the series back under budget. Subsequently, the film won an Academy Award as best short subject of 1963. (For a variety of reasons, this episode plus three others—"A Short Drink from a Certain Fountain," "Sounds and Silences," and "The Encounter"—were shown only once or twice on network television and then never put into syndication.)

In February of 1964, the word came down: CBS would not be renewing *Twilight Zone* for a sixth season. Tom Moore, president of



ABC, expressed interest in picking up the series, but as the title *Twilight Zone* was owned by CBS, he suggested a new name: *Witches, Warlocks and Werewolves*. Rod Serling balked. "What Mr. Moore is looking for is a series about ghouls," Serling told the New York *Daily News*. "I prefer to do a more adult type show with occasional social comment. I was even opposed to the title. *Weird, Wild and Wondrous* would have been more in keeping with my idea." The negotiations fell through.

After 156 *Twilight Zone* episodes—92 of them scripted by Serling—Cayuga Productions shut down its operations—for good. But

this was not the end of *The Twilight Zone*.

"*Twilight Zone* is still being seen all the time," says *Twilight Zone* director Douglas Heyes. "I get constant feedback on it even today. I have young fans who are seventeen and eighteen, who have just seen it for the first time. It holds up, more than any other show I've ever done."

The show left a lasting impression on actors who had worked on it, too. "I ran into Rod in Death Valley about a year before he died," recalls veteran John Anderson ("The Odyssey of Flight 33," etc.). "I was attending a performance at a little opera house in Death Valley Junction, and had been told earlier that Rod Serling had called for a reservation but that he had done so several times before and had not shown. The show began and he hadn't arrived. During intermission, standing outside for a smoke, I noticed a little man near me lighting a cigarette. It was Rod. He glanced up as he blew out the match and after a few pleasantries, he turned into the most ardent *Twilight Zone* fan and said, 'I saw that airplane show you did for us again the other night—gee, that was a good one.' He then spoke of 'A Passage for Trumpet,' and how it had won an award at the Cannes Film Festival. The whole thing was like a scene straight out of his *Twilight Zone*. The two of us standing in the middle of nowhere in the moonlight, an unlikely meeting, a sweet exchange. We put out our smokes, went back into the darkened theater, and I never saw him again."

The network cancellation of *Twilight Zone* was no finale. Rather, it represented the completion of a body of work, a wonderful series of fantasy excursions, whole, in its entirety. That is the miracle of film, that whenever the first frame of a *Twilight Zone* episode threads through a projector the dream is reborn... and the men and women who created it live again.

TV's Twilight Zone: Part Seventeen



CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into the Twilight Zone."



21. IN PRAISE OF PIP

Written by Rod Serling
Producer: Bert Granet
Director: Joseph M. Newman
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: composed by Rene Garriguenc; conducted by Lud Gluskin

Cast
Max Phillips: Jack Klugman
Pip: Billy Mumy
Capt. Pip: Bob Diamond
Mrs. Feeny: Connie Gilchrist
Foran: John Launer
Doctor: Ross Elliott
Surgeon: Stuart Nisbet
George Reynold: Russell Horton
Lieutenant: Gerald Gordon
Man: Greg Martin

"Submitted for your approval, one Maz Phillips, a slightly-the-worse-for-wear maker of book, whose life has been as drab and undistinguished as a bundle of dirty clothes. And, though it's very late in his day, he has an errant wish that the rest of his life might be sent out to a laundry to come back shiny and clean, this to be a gift of love to a son named Pip. Mr. Maz Phillips, Homo sapiens, who is soon to discover that man is not as wise as he thinks—said lesson to be learned in the Twilight Zone."

After learning that his beloved son Pip, now a soldier, has been critically wounded in South Vietnam, alcoholic bookie Max Phillips feels a tremendous remorse for not having been a better father. Out of kindness, he returns \$300 to a luckless bettor—an action that earns him a bullet from one of his boss's

gunmen. Stumbling to an amusement park he used to visit with his son—now closed for the night—Max is amazed to see Pip appear before him, magically transformed into a boy again. The park comes alive and the two relive past pleasures. Suddenly, Pip grows solemn and runs away. When Max catches him, Pip explains he's dying and disappears. Sobbing, Max offers God a trade: himself for the boy. He dies. But his sacrifice is not in vain—Pip survives.

"Very little comment here, save for this small aside: that the ties of flesh are deep and strong, that the capacity to love is a vital, rich and all-consuming function of the human animal, and that you can find nobility and sacrifice and love wherever you may seek it out; down the block, in the heart, or in the Twilight Zone."



122. STEEL

Written by Richard Matheson
Based on his short story, "Steel"
Producer: Bert Granet
Director: Don Weis
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Van Cleave
Makeup: William Tuttle
Cast
"Steel" Kelly: Lee Marvin
Pole: Joe Mantell
Maynard Flash: Chuck Hicks
Battling Maxo: Tipp McClure
Nolan: Merritt Bohn
Maxwell: Frank London
Man's Voice: Larry Barton

"Sports item, circa 1974: Battling Maxo, B2, heavyweight, accompanied by his manager and handler, arrives in Maynard, Kansas, for a scheduled six-round bout. Battling Maxo is a robot, or, to be exact, an android, definition: 'an automaton resembling a human being.' Only these automatons have been permitted in the ring since prizefighting was legally abolished in 1968. This is the story of that scheduled six-round bout, more specifically the story of two men shortly to face that remorseless truth: that no law can be passed which will abolish cruelty or desperate need—nor, for that matter, blind animal courage. Location for the facing of said truth a small, smoke-filled arena just this side of the Twilight Zone."

Battling Maxo, an outmoded B2 model, breaks down before the bout. Desperate for the \$500 fight money to repair Maxo, his manager, "Steel"

Kelly—so-named because, as a heavyweight, he was never knocked down—decides to disguise himself as a robot and fight the Maynard Flash, a brand-new B7, in Maxo's place. Predictably, Steel is beaten to a pulp in the first round, but his ruse is not detected. He is paid half the promised money—not a great deal, but it will help to effect the needed repairs.

"Portrait of a losing side, proof positive that you can't outpunch machinery. Proof also of something else: that no matter what the future brings, man's capacity to rise to the occasion will remain unaltered. His potential for tenacity and optimism continues, as always, to outfight, outpoint and outlive any and all changes made by his society, for which three cheers and a unanimous decision rendered from the Twilight Zone."



123. NIGHTMARE AT 20,000 FEET

Written by Richard Matheson
Based on his short story
Producer: Bert Granet
Director: Richard Donner
Dir. of Photography: Robert W. Pittack
Music: stock
Makeup: William Tuttle
Cast
Bob Wilson: William Shatner
Ruth Wilson: Christine White
Gremlin: Nick Cravat
Flight Engineer: Edward Kemmer
Stewardess: Asa Maynor

"Portrait of a frightened man: Mr. Robert Wilson, thirty-seven, husband, father, and salesman on sick leave. Mr. Wilson has just been discharged from a sanitarium where he spent the last six months recovering from a nervous breakdown, the onset of which took place on an evening not dissimilar to this one, on that evening half a year ago. Mr. Wilson's flight was terminated by the onslaught of his mental breakdown. Tonight, he's traveling all the way to his appointed destination which, contrary to Mr. Wilson's plan, happens to be the darkest corner of the Twilight Zone."

Looking out his window while the plane is in flight, Wilson sees a bulky, furred creature land on the wing. At first, he doubts his own sanity, but soon he comes to believe the evidence of his eyes. The creature is a gremlin, and it means to sabotage one of the engines. Unfortunately, it flies out of sight whenever Wilson summons his wife or the stewardess—and the flight

engineer refuses to heed his warnings to keep a close watch on the wings. Wilson realizes he must act alone, and—seeing that the gremlin has already forcibly torn back one of the cowlings plates—he must act quickly. He removes a pistol from a sleeping policeman, then throws open an emergency door and empties the gun into the gremlin. Mortally wounded, it is swept off the wing. Later, Wilson is taken off the plane in a straitjacket. "It's all right now, darling," his wife reassures him. "I know," he replies, "but I'm the only one who does know—right now."

"The flight of Mr. Robert Wilson has ended now, a flight not only from point A to point B, but also from the fear of recurring mental breakdown. Mr. Wilson has that fear no longer, though; for the moment, he is, as he has said, alone in this assurance. Happily, his conviction will not remain isolated too much longer, for happily tangible manifestation is very often left as evidence of trespass, even from so intangible a quarter as the Twilight Zone." ■



THE ORIGINAL
TELEVISION SCRIPT
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV
APRIL 20, 1962

The Trade-Ins

by Rod Serling

CAST

John Holt Joseph Schildkraut
Martha Holt Alma Platt
Mr. Vance Noah Keen
Farraday Theodore Marcuse
John Holt (young) Edson Stroll
Gambler #1 Terrence de Marney
Gambler #2 Billy Vincent
Receptionist Mary McMahon
Attendant David Armstrong

FADE ON:

1. STANDARD OPENING: "SATELLITE TOP" DISAPPEARING INTO DISTANCE; TWILIGHT ZONE LETTERING APPEARS AND THEN DISINTEGRATES.

PAN DOWN to opening
shot of show.

2. INT. OFFICE DAY

This is a very modern room suggesting accoutrements that belong to a future age, but are sufficiently similar to the present day to be associable and not at all science-fictiony. As the door opens we see the lettering on the outside which reads: "The New Life Corporation." An attractive RECEPTIONIST ushers in our elderly couple. This is JOHN and MARTHA HOLT. He's in his late seventies, she in her mid-seventies. MR. VANCE,

behind the desk, rises and smiles at them, motioning them to small settee which is close to the desk. The old couple walk hand in hand over to the settee and sit down very slowly. The receptionist very discreetly walks out of the room and closes the door behind her.

3. CLOSE SHOT VANCE

As he checks some papers, then looks up smiling toward the old couple.

4. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward the old couple. They continue to clutch each other's hands - very ill at ease, very nervous. Vance puts down the papers.

VANCE

You're seventy-nine years old, Mr. Holt - and you, Mrs. Holt, you're -

MARTHA

I'm seventy-four. I was seventy-four last May.

VANCE

(pleasantly)

I see. Now let's see . . . Medical history.

He frowns slightly, looking down at the papers, then looks up toward the old man.

5. CLOSE SHOT

THE OLD MAN

Etched in his face, in indelible lines and furrows, is a case history of pain

6. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward Vance.

VANCE

A great deal of sickness, Mr. Holt.

HOLT

(nods, puts his eyes down)
Some.

VANCE

I'm sorry to hear that.

There's a silence in the room. Vance clears his throat, looks intently at the old man.

VANCE (cont'd)

Are you in pain now, Mr. Holt?

Holt wets his lips, looks briefly at his wife then down to the floor again.

HOLT

Some.

MARTHA

He's in . . . he's in great pain. It's fairly constant now. It doesn't seem to let up.

VANCE
(softly)

I see.
(then a smile)

Which is one of the reasons,
you see, that the New Life
Corporation is in existence.

He smiles again, rises from
the chair, walks around it,
then leans against it so that
he's much closer to them.

VANCE (cont'd)

We alleviate pain, Mr. and
Mrs. Holt. We make it a
thing of the past. Do you
know what we deal in?

(he looks from one to
the other)

We deal in youth, Mr. and
Mrs. Holt. We deal in a
resurrected life. Cur stock in
trade is simply . . .

(he makes a gesture)
. . . simply rebirth.

MARTHA

Could you . . . could you tell
us what's involved?

VANCE

Easily. The process is quick
and painless. We have
constructed other bodies.
Bodies that are perfect in
composition, concept,
construction. Physiologically
and psychologically you'll
find that you're just as you
are now . . . except in a
different body. A younger
body in the prime of health.
Physically and emotionally,
close to perfection.

HOLT

(in a soft, thin voice)
These bodies -

VANCE

We construct them ourselves.
Plastic, flesh, bone, steel,
wiring . . . an absolutely
perfect duplication of the
human frame and makeup -
but almost totally
invulnerable to disease or
damage. The life span of any
one of our human
receptacles is roughly a

hundred and twelve years.
(he smiles from one to
the other)

You've been married for
how long?

HOLT

Fifty years.

MARTHA

We had our golden
anniversary just two
months ago.

(she reaches over and takes
Holt's hand and squeezes it)

That's sort of the reason . . .
that's sort of the reason we
came here.

7. CLOSE SHOT VANCE

As he looks from one to the
other and his face softens.
There is no subterfuge now.

VANCE

(gently)

A rich life. A happy life. A
full one, I'm sure. And you
don't want this relationship
to end.

HOLT

(nods, then simply)

It can't end. Martha's . . .
(he turns to her)

Martha's all I've got. All I
care about.

8. ANOTHER ANGLE VANCE

VANCE

Of course.

(a pause as he walks back to
the desk)

Well, why don't I show you
some of the models we have
and let you select two that
appeal
to you?

He pushes a button behind his
desk and one entire wall slides
open revealing a long dimly lit
corridor, somewhat like a
museum with glass cases built
into the walls on either side.
This corridor seems to stretch
almost into infinity. Vance
walks over to them from
behind the desk, offers them

his hand, helps them to their
feet, then leads them into
the corridor and they start a
slow walk.

9. MOVING SHOT WITH THEM

As they stop at the first glass
case. There is the figure of a
man, something like a human
statue. He's displayed in rigid
immobility but, despite the
lifelessness of the features,
is an almost perfect physical
specimen.

VANCE

(softly)

This would be the physique
of a man approximately
twenty-two years of age.
You'll notice the height
and muscular composition,
Mr. Holt.

10. DIFFERENT ANGLE OF THEM

As they walk across the
corridor to the display case on
the other side. Here is a
woman - beautiful, even in
this frozen, lifeless state.

VANCE

The female component. We'd
like to see these two go as a
package. You'll note that
they complement each other
greatly. This particular
model would be roughly
twenty-one years of age,
three inches shorter than
the male, but of equivalent
health and potential.

HOLT

What would . . . what would
happen? I mean - how
would -

VANCE

Very simple. We put you to
sleep and then we invest
each of these human replicas
with the prototype's memory
bank, personality,
continuity. You will awake
in these new bodies and live
a life span never before
dreamed of - and you'll live

The Trade-Ins

it with health, contentment and purpose.

11. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As his head turns and he looks across the corridor toward the male figure in the display case. His lips move for a moment before any words come, then finally he speaks.

HOLT

And there's no ... no pain? I wouldn't have this ... this pain?

12. MOVING SHOT WITH HIM

As he takes a slow walk over to the display case, stops for a moment, then leans against the glass, his eyes closed. His body shakes as if with some ague.

HOLT

(his voice almost a sob)

You say there'd be no pain!

13. DIFFERENT ANGLE VANCE

As he comes closer to the old man, puts his arm around his shoulders.

VANCE

No pain, Mr. Holt. For the first time in ... how long, I can only guess ... you'd be free of pain. You'd be a young man again.

(then he turns toward Martha)

And you, Mrs. Holt, would be at his side. Instead of the end ... it would be the beginning. Let me describe for you the way the operation takes place. It's really so simple - so uncomplicated. You'd really be quite amazed.

(he continues to talk, his voice going underneath as the CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY AWAY)

14. PAN SHOT DOWN CORRIDOR

To SERLING, who stands close to one of the display cases.

SERLING

Mr. and Mrs. John Holt - aging people who slowly, and with trembling fingers, turn the last pages of a book of life ... and hope against logic and the preordained, that some magic printing press will add to this book another limited edition. But these two senior citizens happen to live in a time of the future when nothing is impossible - even the trading of old bodies for new. Mr. and Mrs. John Holt ... in their twilight years ... who are about to find ... that there happens to be a zone with the same name!

FADE TO BLACK
OPENING BILLBOARD
FIRST COMMERCIAL

ACT ONE

FADE ON:

15. INT. CORRIDOR DAY MOVING SHOT

With the three people as they pass display case after display case of these strange "human" figures. We hear Vance's voice rising and falling in explanation as he points out this feature and that feature.

16. CLOSE SHOT LOUDSPEAKER

VOICE

(on speaker)

Mr. Vance ... Mr. Vance ... wanted on the videophone.

17. CLOSER ANGLE VANCE

As he smiles at his two old charges.

VANCE

Would you excuse me for a moment?

(then gesturing toward the corridor)

Please feel free to walk around. If you have any questions, I'll be right back.

18. TWO SHOT THE HOLTS

As Vance leaves them to walk back toward his office. Explicit on their faces is a look of growing excitement. Martha turns to her husband.

MARTHA

John? It's like ... it's like a miracle.

HOLT

Maybe too much like a miracle. It isn't real somehow. Just the thought of it ... just the thought of it alone. To live without pain. To be young again. (he turns toward his wife, reaches out with aging fingers to stroke her cheek)

To have it the way it was, Martha.

19. MOVING SHOT WITH THEM

As they retrace their steps back to the first glass display cases.

20. PAN SHOT

Left to the male figure, then right to the female figure.

21. DIFFERENT ANGLE

Of the two old people as they look at one another - a look that probes the depth of all that is pure and meaningful in a relationship between men and women.

HOLT

All over again, Martha. The two of us. We'd have it all over again.

(then a slow, almost shy smile)

You think you can stand me for ... for maybe another century?

She reaches up and kisses him.

MARTHA

For a century or ten centuries.

(then with a voice shaking, she whispers)

Till death do us part, John.

There is the SOUND of hollow, almost metallic, footsteps approaching as Vance comes back into the frame. He smiles from one to the other.

VANCE

Well now - have you chosen?

22. TWO SHOT THE HOLTS

They look at one another.

HOLT

These two here. These . . . young ones.

VANCE

An excellent choice. Two of the finest we have. And they're all ready. We could begin anytime. How about tomorrow morning?

MARTHA

(incredulous)

Tomorrow morning?

(he looks briefly at Holt)

What about . . .

She looks down at her own body and makes a gesture toward it.

VANCE

(with a short boyish laugh)

I'm an incredibly bad salesman. I forgot one of the most important guarantees. You can have the transformation for one week on approval. If you're satisfied . . . we - (he looks from one to the other)

- we exhume your old bodies. But for a one-week period they remain intact should you decide that - (he shrugs, makes a gesture) But you'd be surprised how infrequently that occurs. We've had better than ninety-eight percent satisfaction in the twelve years we've been operating.

23. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As he looks down at his thin, parse, pain-wracked body.



HOLT

Mr. Vance?

(a pause)

How much . . . how much will it cost?

24. DIFFERENT ANGLE

The three of them, favoring the old man and woman. This is obviously the crux of the whole thing and the biggest fear they possess.

VANCE

Why don't we go into my office -

HOLT

(interrupting, shaking his head)

I think we'd better find out right now! How much would it cost?

VANCE

(looking from one to the other)

The entire procedure is five thousand dollars per body. For the two of you it would be -

HOLT

(in a whisper)

Ten thousand dollars?

VANCE

That's correct.

(then, smiling)

By prorating it, Mr. Holt . . . in other words, figuring it

on a basis of cost per year, I might say it's ridiculously low. I mean, five thousand per one hundred years of life span. Well, you can see for yourselves how very economical it is.

25. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As he looks at his wife, clenches and unclenches his fists.

HOLT

We've got five thousand dollars, Mr. Vance. That's all we've got.

(then, wetting his lips)

Could we make a partial payment? I mean . . . we could pay what we've got and then charge the rest.

(then looking toward the figure in the display case)

I'd be able to work again. You could take it out of my salary. As much as you want.

26. CLOSE SHOT VANCE

VANCE

I'm sorry, Mr. Holt, but government regulations prohibit any extension of credit. The transaction must be in cash.

The Trade-Ins

HOLT

(persistent and yet absolutely illogical)

But that's all we've got. Five thousand dollars. It's all we've got in the world. We've been saving it and saving it. Why . . . we've done without almost everything. The doctor bills ate up almost everything, but this money - this is pennies and nickels and dimes. Sometimes it was two meals a day. It was no vacations. It was no movies for months. No television set. It was Martha wearing the same coat and dress for months on end.

He stops, staring into Vance's face hopefully.

27. CLOSE SHOT VANCE

Whose eyes shift.

VANCE

(softly)

I'm really sorry, Mr. Holt, believe me I am. But they are the rules that I have to follow.

He looks away again, obviously reluctant to bring this up, but finally he does look up.

VANCE (cont'd)

We could, of course, perform the transference with just one of you -

28. CLOSE SHOT MARTHA

As she steps forward, her voice excited.

MARTHA

Yes. Yes, that's the way it should be.

(then, to John)

You have it done, John. Use the money for yourself and have it done, and I can wait. I wouldn't mind waiting in the least -

Holt shakes his head, grabs his wife's hand in the middle of a gesture, and holds it tightly.

HOLT

(firmly)

No, Martha. I'd never do that.

(he turns to Vance - very softly)

I couldn't do that, Mr. Vance. It would be both of us . . . or neither of us.

(then, turning to his wife)

We can't be separated. We have to be together. Neither of us is any good without the other.

29. CLOSE SHOT VANCE

VANCE

(nods)

Of course. I understand. (then turning and starting back toward his office)

Perhaps . . . perhaps another time.

30. DIFFERENT HIGH ANGLE

Looking down at them as they walk back down the corridor toward the office. Just once the old man stops to gaze back over his shoulder at the male figure in the display case, then with effort wrenches his eyes away and continues down the corridor.

CUT TO:

31. DIFFERENT LONG ANGLE OF THEM

As Holt stops and sees Martha standing there a few feet from him. She very slowly raises her hand and holds it out to him.

MARTHA

Remember? "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be."

(then, with incredible

gentleness - almost whispering)

"The last of life for which the first was made."

He walks toward her and takes her hand, raises it to his lips and kisses it, and then the two of them walk slowly down the corridor.

DISSOLVE TO:

32. INT. SMALL GAMBLING ROOM

This is one of those cul-de-sacs in the rear of a bar.

33. LONG ANGLE SHOT

Looking down on two card tables and a crap table. A handful of men move around through the dense smoke with cards, dice and stacks of money. There is the SOUND of a buzzer.

34. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Obviously the proprietor and head croupier, starts at the sound of the buzzer and all movement and talk stop in the room.

35. CLOSE SHOT THE DOOR

As a MAN moves over to it, looks over his shoulder expectantly toward Farraday.

36. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who nods and motions toward the door. The man opens it and we look into the dark interior of the other side of the door at what is a silhouette of a human figure, then John Holt steps into the light. He looks frightened and then sure.

HOLT

Mr. Farraday?

The man makes a quick gesture with his head toward Farraday, who steps to the center of the room.

FARRADAY

I'm Farraday.

Holt steps into the room. The man closes the door behind him.

HOLT

The . . . the bartender told me that -

FARRADAY

Go ahead, Pop. What did the bartender tell you?

HOLT

He told me I could . . . that I could gamble in here.

There is the stir of VOICES reacting and one loud laugh that hangs over the stillness.

37. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who grins.

FARRADAY

That's a fact, Pop. You can gamble in here. What's your pleasure? Dice, pcker, Red Dog - what appeals to you?

38. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As he wets his lips, wipes the perspiration off his face.

HOLT

I . . . I used to play poker when I was younger.

Again there's the murmur of reaction and this time the high-pitched laugh is even more pronounced from one of the onlookers.

FARRADAY

We've got a chair for you, Pop. There's a game open. Right over here.

He points to a table where two men sit.

39. MOVING SHOT HOLT

As he walks very slowly over to the table, looking around nervously. He sits down. Farraday follows him over to the table and sits at the far end. The room is absolutely quiet, all eyes on the old man. He reaches into his pocket very slowly and takes out a crumpled-up wad of bills which he puts on the table.

40. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who looks at him, then up into Holt's face.



FARRADAY

Horse come in?

HOLT

No, sir. No, I'm not much for gambling.

He tries to smile but somehow it doesn't come out as a smile.

HOLT (cont'd)

I just happen to . . . I just happen to need the money real bad.

(makes a gesture of resignation)

This is the only way left.

FARRADAY

Need the money bad, huh?

HOLT

(nods)

Very bad.

FARRADAY

There's both sides of the street, though, y'know, Pop. (he points to the money)

You can triple that in ten minutes. Or you can walk away from this table without nothin'.

He takes the cards and starts to shuffle them, then slams them down on the table.

FARRADAY (cont'd)

But you're the boss, Pop. A little five card draw, jacks or better to open, progressive.

41. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

Who looks at him, trying to follow what's been said. His lips tremble.

HOLT

Jacks or . . . jacks or better. That means I have to have at least two jacks or -

MAN #1

(sitting alongside Farraday)

Two jacks or better or you can't open. If nobody gets 'em, next hand is queens or better. And so on.

HOLT

Oh, yes . . . It's beginning to come back now. I understand.

He looks down at the cards, then around the faces of the men.

42. PAN SHOT AROUND THE TABLE

As they look at him. The SHOT ends on Farraday, who points to the cards.

FARRADAY

Go ahead and cut, Pop.

Holt, with a trembling hand, cuts the deck. Farraday scoops the cards up, and with a very quick, professional gesture, starts to deal.

CUT TO:

The Trade-Ins

43. ANGLE SHOT

Over Holt's shoulder as he picks up the cards one by one. The others wait for all five to be dealt and Holt is suddenly aware of the breach. Very self-consciously he puts the cards down and waits for the last one to be dealt. Then, following the movements of the others, he picks up his hand and starts to sort it.

FARRADAY
Pass.

MAN #1
I'll open. A hundred.

He throws a bill down on the center of the table. MAN #2 does likewise. Holt reaches down in the pile and picks up two bills, throws them down in the center of the table.

44. ANGLE SHOT HOLT

From Farraday's P.O.V. We see Holt stop short in his movement, fighting down a bolt of pain that has hit him. His hands tremble, his eyes shut tightly, sweat pours down his face, his breathing is shallow and forced. Then he recovers. His mouth opens. He breathes deeply and leans back in the chair, weak and shaky.

45. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who notices this.

FARRADAY
You all right, Pop?

Holt nods.

FARRADAY (cont'd)
You sick?

HOLT
(wets his lips)
I'll be all right.

DISSOLVE TO:

46. thru 50.

SERIES OF MONTAGE SHOTS

TILT ANGLES of betting and raising. In each case, Holt laying down a hand, then Farraday laying down his and scooping up the pot.

DISSOLVE TO:

51. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

Staring at his hand.

52. PAN SHOT

Down to his trembling hand fingering one of the last three bills remaining in front of him. He throws this into the center of the table.

MAN #1
(throws his hand down)
I'm out.

MAN #2
(does likewise)
Me, too.

53. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

He stares into his hand and slowly closes it up, looks across at Holt, takes two bills from his pile and throws it on the table.

FARRADAY
Raise you five hundred, Pop.

Holt looks down at his last two bills, fingers them and looks up. Again the pain hits him - a sharp, stabbing agony. His fingers clench and unclench, the sweat pours down. He fights it for a long moment then succumbs to it, leans back in the chair, his eyes closed.

HOLT
Excuse me . . . excuse me
just for a moment.

54. CLOSE SHOT THE OTHER MEN

At the table as they look at one another.

55. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who stares at Holt. His eyes narrow.

FARRADAY
You're pretty bad off, aren't you, Pop?

56. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

Who nods against the pain.

FARRADAY
Long time?

HOLT
The last . . . the last several years.

FARRADAY
(looks down at the table)
I'm about to clean you out.
You know that, don't you?

HOLT
(nods - in a whisper)
I know. But I'll be . . . I'll be all right in a minute. I'm sorry to hold up the game.

FARRADAY
(leans forward - rather intently)
Why do you need the money, Pop?

57. CLOSE SHOT HOLT
He just shakes his head.

FARRADAY
Go ahead. Tell me. I'm interested.

58. CLOSER ANGLE HOLT
His head is down and for a moment he doesn't answer. Then he looks up and once again speaks through his pain.

HOLT
Martha and me . . . Martha and me wanted new bodies. It costs ten thousand dollars. I only had the half of it.

(then his head goes down again)
I botched it up.
(he shakes his head)
I'm no good at this. I'm no good at anything anymore.
(his voice catches)

Just a tired, sick old man who can't walk to the corner without taking a pill. Leans on his wife when he climbs three steps. Just a tired, sick old man. Not worth anything to anybody.
(he looks up, the tears rolling down his face)

I wanted to be young again.
I wanted to be strong. I

wanted Martha and I to begin all over.

(he shakes his head, struggling for composure)

I wanted to be able to wake up one morning and get out of my bed and not feel . . . not feel this pain.

59. PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES

Of the silent men.

60. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who lights a cigarette, blows out the smoke, stares at the old man. There is no change of expression. He points very slowly and deliberately to the center of the table.

FARRADAY

You're raised, Pop.

61. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

Who, in almost a spasmodic gesture, pushes the rest of his money into the pile.

HOLT

You're called.

MAN #1

(whistling through his teeth)

Look at that pot. Well, you got five thousand waiting for you.

62. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As he picks up his cards and looks at them. He has three kings.

63. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

He looks at his own hand. He has three aces.

FARRADAY

I've got three big ones, Pop.

64. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

His lips tremble. He flings down his hand face up.

HOLT

Bigger'n those?

65. CLOSE SHOT FARRADAY

Who smiles, closes up his hand, puts them into the deck.



FARRADAY

Nope.

(he pushes the money toward the old man)

Be my guest.

66. CLOSE SHOT HOLT

His eyes go wide. He looks down at the money, reaches for it, then his hands tremble so he has to put them back on his lap.

FARRADAY

(slowly rises)

Game's over, Pop. You walk away. You come with five and you leave with five.

67. CLOSER ANGLE HOLT

As he starts to very slowly and painfully put the bills together until there is one big wad. He shoves this into his pocket then rises and stands there. His head goes down. He runs a shaking hand over his face. The room is suddenly quiet as everyone in it stares at him. He looks up and around the faces. His features twist and contort.

HOLT

I can't help it. Martha'll understand. I can't help it. I don't want to die . . . and yet I can't live like this. Not with the pain.

He turns and starts toward the door, stumbling so that he falls against it, his eyes tightly closed, as the CAMERA MOVES IN ON HIM.

68. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

Of his profile.

HOLT

Martha'll understand. I don't have any choice. I don't have any other choice at all.

He opens the door and starts out into the dark beyond.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT TWO

FADE ON:

69. INT. CORRIDOR (WITH DISPLAY CASES)

Holt stands near the male figure, partly in shadow, as the SOUND of a sliding door and the light from Vance's office reveals the whole of his face in a bright, searching light.

70. REVERSE ANGLE

Toward Vance and Martha. Vance, with a grim look toward Holt, points to him. Martha starts to walk toward

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him. She looks small, fragile, terribly pathetic in her attempt to smile and comfort. She reaches him, kisses him.

MARTHA

Are you all right, John?

He looks at her, unable to speak.

MARTHA (cont'd)
(softly)

That's all right, John. I understand, my dear. I told you before. You should be the one.

She looks toward the male figure in the display case.

CUT TO:

71. CLOSE SHOT THE FIGURE

Martha comes INTO THE FRAME, looking up at it. She turns slowly toward him.

MARTHA

This is just the way it should be.

He takes a step toward her.

HOLT

Forgive me, Martha? Please forgive me? It was just that . . . I can't stand the pain anymore.

She smiles and her voice is very gentle.

MARTHA

Of course you can't.

(she turns and calls in a quavery little voice)

Mr. Vance?

72. LONG SHOT DOWN THE CORRIDOR

Toward Vance's office. He appears.

MARTHA

John is ready now. He's all ready.

(she looks briefly toward the male figure)

He's all ready for his . . . his resurrection.

(then, turning toward her husband)

Go ahead, my dear. They're waiting for you.

73. MED. LONG SHOT VANCE

VANCE

Are you, Mr. Holt? Are you ready?

74. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward Holt. He nods tentatively, then starts a slow walk toward Vance.

75. MOVING SHOT WITH THEM

HOLT

(very softly)

I'm ready.

He walks into Vance's office, stands there with his back to the sliding door, hears the hum of it as it starts to close, turns.

76. LONG SHOT

Over his shoulder of Martha standing in the corridor. Holt instinctively shouts.

HOLT

-(shouting)

Wait!

The doors stop closing. Martha is framed between the partially closed doors.

77. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward Holt, as he looks out through the small place between the doors.

HOLT

Martha? Martha? . . . will you forgive me?

78. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward Martha, A SLOW DOLLY INTO HER. She slowly raises her right hand and throws him a kiss. There is the SOUND of the doors closing, and the light on her face is replaced by shadow. She turns slowly to look across the corridor toward the female figure, looks at it for an interminable moment, smiles a little sadly, is

suddenly aware of another door sliding open and light hits her from another direction. Two men, in white coats, walk past her over to the display case. They open it up and take down the figure of the male. They carry it back down the corridor, disappearing into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

79. FULL SHOT BRIGHTLY LIT HALL

Outside of an operating room leading to a bank of elevators. This is antiseptically white and hospital-like. Martha sits alone on a bench. She looks up at a clock then toward swinging doors at the other end of the corridor. After a moment, they open and two men come out pushing a wheeled stretcher. On it is a sheet and a shrouded body.

80. REVERSE ANGLE

Looking toward them as they start toward Martha. She rises. When they come abreast of her, she holds up her hand in almost a pleading gesture and looks toward the sheeted figure. Then she looks back up toward one of the attendants, who exchanges a look with the other one, who nods. The first attendant very carefully pulls down the sheet and we see the white, lifeless face of John Holt.

81. ANGLE SHOT

Looking up toward Martha. For a moment she looks stunned then turns to face the attendant.

MARTHA

Is he . . . is he all right?

The attendant puts the sheet back over the face.

ATTENDANT

Your husband is fine, Mrs. Holt. He'll be coming out in a moment. He's just fine.

They continue to wheel the body toward the elevators. CAMERA PANS OVER to the swinging doors.

82. MED. LONG SHOT ELEVATOR DOORS

As they open. First two surgeons come out, removing their masks, then Vance. They talk in low, inaudible conversation, occasionally looking toward Martha. Then Vance steps aside and the young man walks out. It is the same figure we've seen in the display case but now vibrant, alive, youthful. He walks out, at first stiffly as if trying out some new device. He looks at his hands and then at his feet, flexes his fingers, looks up and down his body, touching himself. Then he sees Martha, and he smiles. He makes a kind of half-wave toward her and smiles again.

HOLT

calling out)
Martha? Martha, look at me!

He starts to walk toward her, first carefully, then faster, then he breaks into a run.

83. ANGLE SHOT MARTHA as he runs past her.

CUT TO:

84. LONG SHOT DOWN THE CORRIDOR

as he runs its full length, jamming against the far wall, then turns, half runs, half skips back over to her. He holds out his hands and arms, incredulous, amazed, exuberant. He looks down at her.

HOLT

Look, Martha. Look at me! I could run a mile. I could do push-ups, handstands - anything! Martha, look at me. Look at how young I am! He reaches out to grab her shoulder)



And no pain, Martha. No pain at all!

(he whirls around to look toward Vance and the surgeons)

Thank you! Thank you and God bless you. I'll never forget it. I promise you - I'll never forget it.

85. CLOSE TWO SHOT HOLT AND MARTHA

As he turns her toward him, holding tightly onto her shoulders. His voice fairly shakes with excitement, exuberance, joy.

HOLT

Martha, my darling . . . do you know what happens now? Do you know? (he grabs her tighter, his features moving)

HOLT (cont'd)

You and I . . . you and I, Martha . . . now we'll really begin to live! We're going to do everything on God's earth that we haven't been able to do! The big things, the little things, the wild things - the crazy illogical things. The things we were too old to do or too sick to do or too tired to do!

86. CLOSE SHOT MARTHA

Her eyes respond to him, her tiny old face reflecting his youth, her lips forming a silent excited assent to everything he's saying.

87. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING AT HIM

HOLT

Do you understand, Martha? Every day is going to be a wedding day for us - and every afternoon a reception, and every evening a honeymoon, and every seventh day an anniversary. Martha, my darling, you and I are going to live! We are going to -

He stops abruptly, his mouth open, his eyes going wide, and there is a sudden, absolute shocking silence as he stares deep into her face. The CAMERA ARCS AROUND so that now we are SHOOTING INTO HER FACE from HIS P.O.V. At first she is confused and questioning, then gradually she is aware, and then she is stunned. Very slowly her right hand is lifted in a forlorn, pathetic, heartrending gesture to straighten her hair.

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88. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

The gnarled, veined, work-worn hand.

89. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT HOLT

As he sees it, recognizes it, understands it.

90. CLOSE TWO SHOT THE TWO OF THEM

Standing, looking at one another - a world falling to pieces around them.

VANCE'S VOICE

(coming on scene)

I have some papers for you to sign, Mr. Holt. Would you come downstairs with me?

91. FULL SHOT THE CORRIDOR

Taking in all three people.

92. ANGLE SHOT HOLT

As he walks back toward the swinging doors, stopping for a moment to look over his shoulder at the little old woman who stands there so alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

93. INT. VANCE'S OFFICE

The sliding doors leading to the corridor are open. Martha sits there alone. Hearing footsteps, she rises, walks into the corridor, stops, reacts.

94. LONG SHOT

Over her shoulder of two shadowy figures approaching from the other end. They're carrying something. They come into the light. One of them opens up the display case and we see them place a figure back inside. At this moment the front door leading to Vance's office opens. Vance enters, leaving the door open behind him.



VANCE

I'm sorry it took so long, Mrs. Holt. Your husband's waiting for you.

95. MOVING SHOT WITH HER

As she crosses the office and goes out through the open door.

CUT TO:

96. INT. WAITING ROOM

There stands John Holt as he was when we first saw him. The same age, the same debility, the same incipient pain. But when he smiles at her, the eyes are strangely young, the look incredibly content. He moves across to her, cups her face in his hands.

HOLT

(very softly)

Martha, my dear, if you ... if you must come with occasional pain ...

(he smiles)

... then, so be it.

(he shakes his head)

I wouldn't have it any other way.

(a pause. He smiles)

Browning. Remember it? "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be. The last of life for which the first was made."

MARTHA

(smiling)

"Our times are in His hand. Whose saith a whole I plan. Youth shows but half. Trust God. See all. Nor be afraid."

He kisses her and the two of them walk out of the anteroom, down another corridor. And as they walk their hands touch and then hold each other.

97. SHOT OF VANCE

As he watches them through the open doors. He sighs, turns, notices the open door of the display corridor, walks into it and stares up at the first display case, where once again the youthful male figure stands immobile.

SERLING'S VOICE

From Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet": "Love gives naught but itself and takes naught from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; for love is sufficient unto love." Not a lesson ... just a reminder from all the sentimentalists ... in the Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END 12

THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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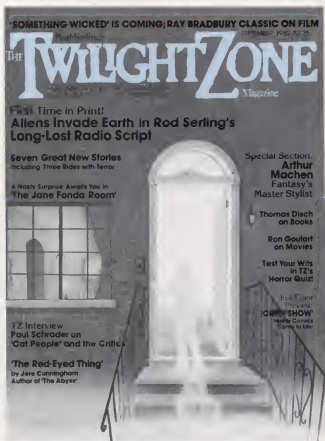
APRIL '81: Stephen King interview; *Grail* by Harlan Ellison; *The Rose Wall* by Joyce Carol Oates; *Show-by-Show Guide to TV's 'Twilight Zone,'* part 1; new stories by Robert Sheckley, George R. R. Martin, Felice Picano, & Ron Goulart; *Walking Distance*, classic Serling script; *Escape from New York* preview; Rod Serling biography. MAY: Original fiction by Robert Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Roger Zelazny, Spider Robinson, & others; Peter Straub interview; Tanith Lee novelette; classic Serling script, *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*; *Show-by-Show #2*; preview of *The Hand*. JUNE: Stephen King's new thriller, *The Jaunt*; Robert Bloch interview; two long-lost tales by Anthony Boucher; classic TZ script, *The After Hours*; 100 Years of Fantasy Illustration; *Outland* preview; *Show-by-Show #3*. JULY: A dozen new tales by Robert Silverberg, Robert Sheckley, Ron Goulart, Charles L. Grant, Stanley Schmidt, & others; *Superman's* Richard Donner on directing *The Twilight Zone*; Serling's tv thriller, *The Eye of the Beholder*; *Show-by-Show #4*. SEPTEMBER: Richard Matheson interview; new fiction by John Sladek, Gary Brandner, & Parke Godwin; TV history, *Forerunners of 'The Twilight Zone'*; Serling classic, *Time Enough at Last*; Dr. Van Helsing on fear of ghosts; *Show-by-Show #6*. OCTOBER: New stories by Robert Sheckley, Pamela Sargent, George Clayton Johnson, Donald Olson; Matheson interview, part 2; preview, *The Beast Within*; TZ script, *The Big Tall Wish*; *Show-by-Show #7*. NOVEMBER: New tales by Tanith Lee, Thomas Disch, Ramsey Campbell, Stanley Schmidt, & Clark Howard; John Saul interview; TZ script, *Death's Head Revisited*; preview of *Halloween II*; Dr. Van Helsing on the joy of terror; *Show-by-Show #8*. DECEMBER: An outspoken interview with Harlan Ellison; *The Midnight Sun*, TZ classic script; M. R. James profile & James classic, *The Ash-Tree*; *Quest for Fire* preview; 82 new tales of humor & horror; *Show-by-Show #9*. JANUARY '82: Rod Serling recalls *My Most Memorable Christmas*; Frank Belknap Long recalls H. P. Lovecraft; *Ghost Story* preview; fiction by Robert Sheckley, Reginald Bretton, Parke Godwin, Connie Willis, & John Morressy; *The Night of the Meek*, Santa in TZ classic; LeFanu profile & classic tale; *Show-by-Show #10*. MARCH: Fritz Leiber interview, plus Leiber classic; 8 new tales by Ron Goulart, Robert Vardeman, & others; on the set of *The Thing*; preview of *Stab*, with Roy Scheider & Meryl Streep, Serling's *A Passage for Trumpet*; *Show-by-Show #12*. APRIL: Anniversary Special, with TZ's 3 story contest winners; Rod Serling's last interview; tales by Joan Aiken, Harlan Ellison, Ramsey Campbell, & George Alec Effinger; *Cat People* preview; William Hope Hodgson horror classic & profile; TZ cast party; *Show-by-Show #13*. MAY: Peter Straub's new novelette, *The General's Wife*; Terry Gilliam interview; on the *Creepshow* set with Stephen King & George Romero; Serling's *The Four of Us Are Dying*, plus George Clayton Johnson's original story; 7 new tales by Connie Willis, Kit Reed, & others; *Dark Crystal* preview; Tierney's *Doomsday Poems*; *Show-by-Show #14*. JUNE: Richard Matheson's unseen TZ script, *The Doll*; Philip K. Dick interview; *Blade Runner* preview; *Fantasy in Clay*, photo feature; 9 new tales by Pamela Sargent, Richard Christian Matheson, & others; *Show-by-Show #15*. JULY: Stories by Robert Silverberg, Joan Aiken, & Joe Lansdale; Stephen King on films, Thomas Disch on books; Robertson Davies interview & story; *Ghastly Britain* photos; preview of *The Thing*; Serling's *100 Yards Over the Rim*; Making *The Last Horror Film*; *Show-by-Show #16*.

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In September's TZ



SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES is coming! After twenty years, filming has at last begun on Ray Bradbury's 1962 fantasy classic. In next month's TZ, you'll get an advance look at this long-awaited film from Ed Naha—and some personal reactions from Bradbury himself ... Even before he created **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**, Rod Serling dreamed of alien invasions—and you can read the result in **A MACHINE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION**, a long-lost Serling radio script guaranteed to harm and horrify you! ... In September's TZ Interview, director Paul Schrader defends his controversial **CAT PEOPLE**—and makes it clear that working with the big cats was as scary as anything you saw on the screen ... Jere Cunningham, author of last season's supernatural thriller *The Abyss*, introduces you to something they may be waiting for you, right now, in the hall closet. It's called **THE RED-EYED THING** ... When George Romero trained his cameras on Stephen King, E.G. Marshall, Adrienne Barbeau, Fritz Weaver, and Hal Holbrook, he brought a horror comic to life.

CREEPSHOW promises to be one of the biggest hits of the summer, and TZ shows you the best scenes, in lurid color ... Fantasy historian Mike Ashley profiles one of the field's supreme prose stylists, Arthur Machen, whose magical imagination turned the world into a place of dread and wonder. And you'll get a unique overview of his work in **A MACHEN SAMPLER** ... Test your fantasy IQ in TZ's special **HORROR QUIZ**—an entertaining new feature beginning next month ... From subway to highway to city streets, **THREE RIDES WITH TERROR** presents a gripping trio of travel tales, three unforgettable journeys into the Twilight Zone ... We can't reveal what's inside **THE JANE FONDA ROOM**, a neat little chiller by Jonathan Carroll, except to say that it's a long long way from Golden Pond ... Plus two more tales of surpassing weirdness, columns by the bibliophilic Thomas Disch and movie-mad Ron Goulart, a look at additional **TWILIGHT ZONE** episodes with Marc Scott Zicree, and even a few way-out cartoons. Don't miss this issue.